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62nd year of publication

Pakistan after Musharraf: a weaker or a stronger country?

Harry der Nederlanden

Subjected to intense pressure, threats of impeachment and a trial for treason, Pakistan's President Musharraf at last saw the writing on the wall and resigned. He functioned largely as a military dictator for the nine years of his regime, when he led a military coup against the democratically elected but inept and corrupt government led by Nawaz Sharif. Sharif is now leading the movement to have Musharraf brought to trial for treason.

Musharraf

As Chief of the army, Musharraf sided with the West's campaign against al Qaeda and other Islamist militants. He saw them as a threat to his own country as well as to the West. However, critics in the west complained that often Musharraf's support was more talk than action. At home his critics painted him as a Bush puppet, even though he didn't always respond to the pull on the strings. Nevertheless, he was able to extract billions in aid from the U.S. Only Afghanistan received more aid.

Although at the insistence of the opposition parties, he stepped down as chief of the army to serve as a wholly civilian president, his popularity kept dropping. Pakistan's economy has been faltering, and the militants, previously confined to the tribal border areas have been setting off bombs in the major cities. Most Pakistanis tend to blame the escalation of violence, not on the militants or the Taliban, but on Musharraf for becoming involved in the War against Terror after 9/11.

In an emotional one-hour speech on televison, Musharraf said he wanted to spare Pakistan from a dangerous power struggle with opponents vowing to impeach him. He said he was satisfied that all he had done "was for the people and for the country."

"I hope the nation and the people will forgive my mistakes," he said.

His political exit robs the West of a stalwart ally who echoed its concern about how Islamic militancy is destabilizing Afghanistan and Pakistan, where Al Qaeda and the Taliban have regained strength. However, his influence has faded since he stepped down as Army chief last year.

It remains an open question whom parliament will elect to succeed Musharraf, partly because the ruling coalition has vowed to strip the presidency of much of its power.

There is speculation that both Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif, the leaders of the two main parties, are interested in the role. However, neither has openly said so.

See **Pakistan** *on page 2*

Jihadis shift attention to war in Afghanistan

Caryle Murphy

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – In the wake of setbacks suffered by Al Qaeda in Iraq, Afghanistan is becoming the preferred destination for Muslims, particularly from Arab nations, seeking to wage jihad against the West.

"You can predict that Afghanistan is reemerging as a battlefield," says Nicole Stracke, a security and terrorism researcher at the Dubai-based Gulf Research Center.

At the same time, jihadi websites affiliated with Al Qaeda have been giving renewed emphasis to the war in Afghanistan, especially in recruitment advertisements, after years of highlighting the battle against US forces in Iraq, says Brian Glyn Williams, associate professor of Islamic history at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth.

"The perception on many Al Qaeda websites is that the momentum has come around to the side of the insurgency and that Afghanistan is winnable" as opposed to the war in Iraq, which is "no longer seen as a sure thing," says Mr. Williams.

That is a big change from four years ago, he adds, when "all the interest was in Iraq." Afghanistan "might be forgotten by the West but Al Qaeda never took their eye off the ball," he says. "They're biding their time." Both he and Stracke say that the refocus on Afghanistan began in mid-2007 with the weakening of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Coincidentally, they noted, Al Qaeda operations in Afghanistan increased.

"By 2007, jihadist websites from Chechnya to Turkey to the Arab world began to feature recruitment ads calling on the 'Lions of Islam' to come fight in Afghanistan," Williams wrote in the February 2008 issue of CTC Sentinel, the online journal of West Point's Combating Terrorism Center. "It appears that many heeded the call. This was especially true after the Anbar Awakening of anti-Al Qaeda tribal leaders and General David Petraeus' 'surge strategy' made Iraq less hospitable for foreign volunteers."

Stracke added that in the past six months, AQI "has lost a lot of fighters," especially ones in its "second layer of leadership, the ones who recruit and plan operations." As a result, she says, many new recruits are going instead to Afghanistan.

But the commander of US forces in Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus, offered a cautious judgment of the new trend in an interview last month with the Associated Press. "We do think that there is some assessment ongoing as to the continued viability of Al Qaeda's fight in Iraq."

While Al Qaeda is "not going to abandon" Iraq or "write it off," General Petraeus added, "what they certainly may do is start to provide some of those resources that would have come to Iraq to Pakistan, possibly Afghanistan."

He noted that the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq "has been reduced very substantially," from a peak of 80 to 100 per month to about 20. AQI attacks have dropped since late spring 2007, from more than 120 per month to less than 40 per month during the past three months, according to a Multi-National Forces in Iraq (MNF-I) spokesperson in Baghdad.

Afghan farmer in poppies

The spokesperson said MNF-I "has no indications" that Al Qaeda's leadership "is making a strategic shift in resources." Instead, it sees "a tactical shift in where these terrorists go to fight, thus allowing these terrorists a better opportunity to enter the fight sooner rather than later."

In Afghanistan, Western and Afghan officials report an increase in foreign fighters in the Taliban's fight. But officials are reluctant to disclose nationalities. "Last week, we arrested a group of fighters in the south and there was not a single Afghan amongst them," says Mohammad Zaher Azimi.

Brig. Gen. Richard Blanchette, spokesman for NATO'S 40-nation International Security Assistance Force, said that "it is clear that there is an increase in foreign fighters behind the insurgency in Afghanistan, facilitated by the porous border with Pakistan. This has made the current fighting season a tough one."

General Blanchette added that the ISAF "has no evidence to suggest there is increased movement of insurgents from Iraq to Afghanistan as of now."

The total number of Arabs fighting in Afghanistan is not huge – Williams estimates between 1,000 to 1,500. But he says that they have introduced nefarious tactics such as suicide bombings.

• *Anand Gopal contributed reporting from Kabul, Afghanistan, and Tom A. Peter from Basra, Iraq.*

News

Abolitionists take on slavery – online

Jane Lampman

How do you eliminate slavery and human trafficking? Modern abolitionists across the globe are tackling that question head on – and collaborating via the Internet on their efforts.

Through Changemakers.net, many have joined in a global competition to identify the most innovative antislavery programs and extend their impact.

More than 230 groups from 50 countries entered this summer's competition, titled "Ending Global Slavery: Everyday Heroes Leading the Way." Judges knowledgeable about slavery selected 15 finalists, and last week the online community voted for three winners.

"We're incredibly proud of our online community who stepped forward to collaborate, discuss, and draw out the most effective ideas in this issue regarding human dignity," said Charlie Brown, Changemaker's executive director, on announcing the winners.

An initiative of Ashoka, a global association of social entrepreneurs, Change-makers has run 20 competitions online to promote innovative solutions in areas such as water and sanitation, geotourism, ending corruption, and sports for a better world. All applications in a competition go up on the Web, where others can comment, learn from, and help refine the ideas and programs.

"We wondered if the topic of slavery would be so sensitive or taboo that it might endanger people doing the work," says Tito Llantada, director of competitions. "But many more applications came in than usual."

The emancipation network: Slavery survivors in Katmandu, Nepal, make handicrafts that are sold in the US to raise awareness of slavery.

The three winning programs pioneer differing approaches to fighting the complex problem:

- Carpets for Communities, a Cambodian organization, carries out grass-roots interventions into child trafficking and labor, providing mothers with an income (rugmaking at home) so that their children can go to school instead. Children are often sold or forced into working so their families can survive.
- The Code.org provides the international tourism industry with a tool to prevent and combat child sex tourism. According to UNICEF, about 2 million children fall victim to sex tourism, pornography, and trafficking every year. Some 600 companies so far have signed onto a code of conduct that addresses the tourism supply chain, from corporate ethical policies and training personnel to educating travelers, requiring standards of suppliers, and working with local officials in countries of destination.
- The Emancipation Network (TEN) raises awareness of slavery among Americans and creates jobs for survivors of slavery in several countries to help them achieve independence.

After seeing a documentary on efforts to rescue slaves in India, composer Sara Symons was inspired to switch her life focus. Once slaves are rescued and go to shelters, they often have no place to go. Trafficked as children, they lack the skills to live on their own and are stigmatized by society.

Ms. Symons realized in 2005 that the handicrafts they made for therapeutic purposes could turn into a full-blown economic opportunity.

Today, she and her husband, John Berger, who left a Wall Street career to join the venture, work with 18 shelters in eight countries that care for former slaves. TEN trains the survivors in business development and product design, and purchases and sells the handicrafts in the US (www.madebysurvivors.com).

They market the crafts online, in a store on Cape Cod, Mass., and particularly through home "awareness" parties. The home parties also serve as a means to educate people about slavery and build the abolition movement in the US, Mr. Berger says in an interview. (They also partner with Polaris Project and Free the Slaves, in the US.)

This summer, TEN opened the Destiny Production Center in a three-story house in Calcutta, India, where a number of women will work and provide for themselves. The $5,000 prize for winning the competition will go to the Center. "Thanks to this competition, we have found some new partners and programs to work with, and the prize will help us buy sewing machines and pay wages to the survivors," Berger says.

He sees the contest as bringing benefits to all involved, not just the winners. "The abolitionist movement is still small, and the competition provided a great opportunity for little-known but amazing programs to let the world know about their work," he adds. The comments from others also help groups modify and strengthen their programs.

Other nonprofits among the 15 finalists ranged from a coalition against trafficking of women and girls, which educates young men and groups such as cabdrivers about sexual exploitation, to an antitrafficking task force focused on the ports in the Philippines.

"A lot of times folks on the ground with a great innovation that has impact don't have time to showcase it. We give them space to present their 'innovation blueprint,'" Mr. Llantada says. Each competition not only builds a community and spurs others to action, he adds, but serves to connect projects with foundations and other philanthropists.

The latest competition, now under way, is a Changemakers partnership with Citi, called "Banking for Social Change," which seeks cutting-edge methods that will "allow financial security to become a reality for everyone."

Jane Lampman is a staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Pakistan *continued from page 1*

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said leaders of the ruling coalition would discuss later Monday whether to prosecute Musharraf in court on the impeachment charges. The charges were expected to include violating the Constitution and gross misconduct, likely in connection with the ouster of the judges and the declaration of emergency rule. His reputation suffered fatal blows in 2007 when he ousted dozens of judges and imposed emergency rule.

Briefly, his political foes put those issues on the back burner and got on with celebrating.

"It is a victory of democratic forces," Information Minister Sherry Rehman said. "Today, the shadow of dictatorship that has prevailed for long over this country, that chapter has been closed."

Nations including British and Germany, which both have troops in Afghanistan and worry about Al Qaeda plotting attacks on their soil from havens in Pakistan, urged the civilian government to bolster their security policies as well as Pakistani democracy.

However, the Afghan government, which accuses Pakistan of secretly aiding the Taliban, could not resist a parting shot. Musharraf "was not someone good for Afghanistan," Interior Ministry spokesman Zemeri Bashary said, accusing him of being an ally of the US in words only.

Since the United States and its allies went to war in Afghanistan in 2001, Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas (FATA) – which fall outside Pakistan's federal laws under a system developed by the British – have become a haven for Al Qaeda and Afghan insurgents.

Militants in FATA have, in recent weeks, stepped up efforts to sabotage trucks carrying supplies destined for NATO troops in Afghanistan. They have also infiltrated the Swat Valley, a former tourist hot spot outside the tribal areas.

Alongside a military campaign against the militants, Pakistan's government has struck a number of deals with pro-Taliban warlords in the area. But its critics say such deals have served only to embolden the militants and allow them to regroup during cease-fires. Other deals have collapsed.

In 2006, a pact was made with the area's senior Taliban boss, Baitullah Mehsud, who is accused of murdering two-time prime minister Benazir Bhutto last December. By the time the deal had collapsed, Mr. Mehsud was believed to have strengthened his position both in his South Waziristan base and further afield.

But Pakistan's Army spokesman, Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas, says that such deals should give the government and the Army enough stability to generate economic growth in the tribal areas – which could deter would-be militants more powerfully than force alone.

He adds, however, that Pakistan's Army is under-resourced. In particular, he says, it is short of helicopters – "what we have is peanuts" – and communication systems.

"In some places, the militants have better communication systems than the Army," he charges.

When Musharraf – a sporty and respected soldier who won gallantry medals during Pakistan's 1965 war against India – ousted then-Prime Minister Sharif in a bloodless coup in 1999, opinion polls showed 70 percent of the public was behind him.

Pakistanis had become disenchanted with the allegedly corrupt civilian rule of Sharif, whom Musharraf put on trial for corruption and sent into exile. It was Sharif who pushed hardest in recent days for Musharraf's exit.

Musharraf became the fourth military ruler of Pakistan, which has been governed by the Army for more than half its 60-year existence.

The US soon conscripted this religious moderate as a key ally in its fight against terrorism.

He also did much to build bridges between India and Pakistan, initiating a cease-fire across the border in 2003 and pushing for peace talks, especially over the disputed region of Kashmir.

But the tide began to turn against Musharraf last year. A violent Army siege against the radical Red Mosque in Islamabad, in which 105 people were killed triggered a surge in Islamic militancy in Pakistan. Today, many Pakistanis attribute the country's militancy problem to Musharraf's close alliance with the US.

Last November, Musharraf ousted dozens of judges and imposed a state of emergency when the Supreme Court met to rule on the legality of his reelection as president while still Army chief.

"His going will allow the transition to democracy," says Ahsan Iqbal, education minister and a senior spokesman of Sharif's PML-N Party. "It will bring internal harmony and restore stability to the country."

There are concerns, however, that the government is not up to the task, having proved itself inefficient and fractured during its few months of rule. When Sharif and Zardari announced they were seeking to impeach Musharraf, it was a rare moment of unity between the former bitter allies.

But before going after Musharraf, the government plans to strip the president's powers by altering the Constitution. This will require two-thirds support in both houses of parliament, raising the prospect of another long squabble over how to reform the presidency – and who then should take the job.

News

A "no-brainer" with consequences

I read back in the May 12 issue a request for stories about raising money for tuition. I pondered this for a few months and decided to put some words on paper finally. I hope it isn't too late but hope you can use this to encourage those who are thinking about Christian Education. I could have written more about the education system itself but that's for another time I guess. We started out in Christian Education about 20 years ago when our oldest started kindergarten and have been in it continuously since. Our youngest is graduating next year (he is in grade 12) so it will be a whole new world for us. The money saved on not paying tuition is going towards university tuition but we plan to stay connected with the Christian schools. I always wondered why people just drop out of supporting Christian schools when their youngest graduates. It has been a wonderful experience for us – some ups and downs but overall we are very happy we decided to send our kids there.

Janet Beldman

Janet Beldman

How do you ever pay for all that tuition? Why do you even bother when you can get an education from the public or Catholic system for "free"? These are questions I am often asked when I say that all my kids have attended or still attend the Christian schools. The why is pretty easy to answer – I want my children to know that God is all and in all and nothing is independent of him. I want them to learn from a truthful perspective – that God is the creator and sustainer of my life and theirs. The how is a mystery to me. How did we ever manage to pay it for the past 20 or so years?

I grew up on a farm and the Christian School was out of my parent's financial reach. It was evident that the church did not agree with their decision and made no qualms about showing this. My father was not able to sit on consistory and we kids, who did not attend Christian Day school were expected to attend Sunday School after church each week until we were of "catechism age". It was a class of about 10 kids ranging in ages from 6 to 12. We were segregated, you might say – the "back of the bus crowd". We did not mix with the Christian School kids so church was a lonely place for me – I was the outcast.

The icing on the cake was at a graduation ceremony for the local Christian School, held in the church, for the grade 8 class of my older cousin. The principal invited all to join them for coffee, tea and strawberry ice cream sundaes for the kids. I was looking forward to this sundae but imagine my surprise when I came to the front of the line, only to be told I couldn't have one because I wasn't a pupil at the Christian School. I was only 9 or 10 at the time, but the shun cut me deep. I was totally turned off by Christian Schools. I vowed never to have anything to do with Christian schools.

Fast forward about 15 years. I was married, had 1.2 children (one toddler and one on the way) and lived in the city now. I was asked to use my creative skills on the bazaar committee of the local Christian School. I agreed and looking back it was a smart move on the school's part. I became familiar with the school, the programs, the curriculum and the deep sense of love and caring by all involved with the school. I saw that it was good school and began to have second thoughts about Christian education.

When our oldest was ready for Kindergarten, we discussed Christian education but the only questionable area was financing. We knew in our hearts that it was the right thing to do and we had to trust that God would provide the means.

At the time, I was a stay-at-home Mom with three small children and I babysat for a friend. We had to supplement our income to cover tuition so I took in more kids in a daycare setting. I had two extra children full-time plus a few part-time as well as my own children. The house was full but it was fun. My husband Ray worked in the construction industry and was fully employed so it looked good for the future. That's when the bottom dropped out.

The economy took a nose dive and suddenly we were looking at unemployment. It was frightening for us but we trusted God to provide so pulling our children out of the school was not an option. We had four children of our own by then. Ray found some work here and there but companies closed faster than we could keep up and he was unemployed many times. I took on more children in day care and decided to take on a paper route in the early morning to keep up with the bills.

Looking back on those days, I wonder how I ever did it. I was up at 3 a.m. to deliver two paper routes, had children dropped off at the house for day care as soon as I came home, had breakfast to make, get my children off to school, other children to feed and entertain all day, supper to make, laundry to do etc., I was exhausted all the time.

My husband was able to find work for a local company but the work site was three hours away so he would stay in a motel for a few days a week to save on the gas (motel was paid for by the company) while I stayed home keeping the home fires burning. We knew that we couldn't keep this up, so he decided to go back to college to learn a new trade with help from unemployment insurance.

It was during this time that we realized our second son had learning disabilities and needed therapy for speech and other needs. At the time, the Ontario government did not include private or independent schools in its' programs to provide support services for special needs children so any therapy we could find, we had to pay for ourselves. These therapies were in a "private" setting so the cost was prohibitive. This was an extra burden for us financially but we plowed onward.

I was able to find therapy for low costs at the local university – the students needed children to practise with. This still meant extra costs in gas and parking a few days a week. We were also able to find a speech therapist who charged us half price and was able to see our son in the evenings so he didn't have to miss any school.

A few years later our youngest son who was also delayed, needed therapy in language and motor skills, so in order to receive government sponsored help, I had to enroll him part time, in a local daycare which was subsidized. That freed up time to take my other son to his therapy.

My mother would drive for an hour from her place to mine, just to watch my other children so I could take him to therapy. I had cut back on babysitting to part-time only. I was still doing the papers but knew I had to give that up – I couldn't keep up the pace anymore.

By this time, Ray had completed college and had found an apprenticeship and was well on the way to working full time again. I helped out in my older son's classroom for two mornings a week to give his teacher extra time to work with him. This proved to be a necessary service so the school board decided it was worth hiring a part-time teacher's aide. Until the formal hiring was complete, the principal asked me to stay on as the TA. I was led to believe that I would probably be hired.

This was great as I could let the babysitting go plus no more early mornings delivering papers, more time to concentrate on my own children. This was a part time job which helped pay the tuition. It was a circle – it was perfect. The money the board paid out to me came back to them in tuition.

The crash came when they completed the hiring process six weeks later and they decided to hire someone else with a ECE degree. Suddenly I was out of work. I was back in square one. It was devastating for me and our family. I did have a college degree but to get back into that line of work would need some major upgrading and that line of work did not appeal to me anymore.

I always said that when God closes a door, he opens a window and he did this time. Looking back, I can see God's hand in this as it opened a new opportunity for me and it worked out great. A friend suggested I try to get my school bus license and drive a bus. This would be ideal as I could still help out in the school, and take my sons to their various therapies in between bus runs. The only negative aspect of this job was that I was not

See **"No-brainer"** *on page 5*

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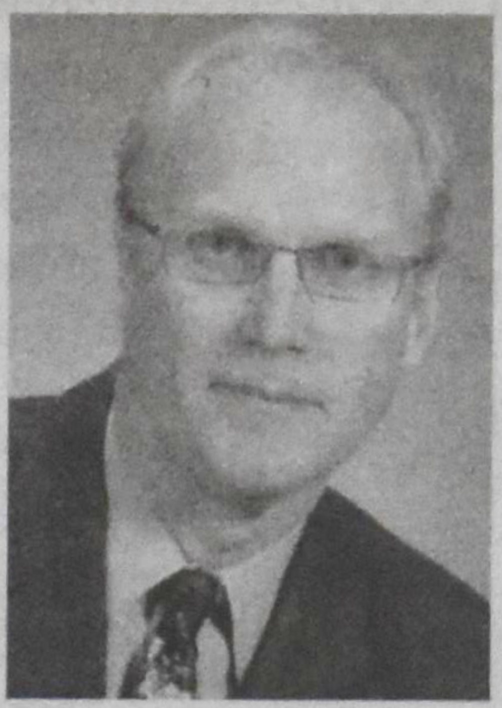

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Guest editorial

The choice is between life and death

Bert Witvoet

My friend Harry der Nederlanden is dying of cancer. At least, that is the verdict he received from his doctors. He is not expected to make it to Christmas, he reported to the board. Of course, the doctors can be wrong, but that is not likely. We know the power of cancer, and we have seen that, after several years of unsuccessful radiation and chemo therapy, this deadly disease is not giving any indication of letting up. It's not that we don't believe that God can still heal Harry. But it's not what Harry and all of us who stand around him expect. The indications of the Spirit point to a quiet acceptance of what the ultimate will of God is.

This may sound harsh, but there is nothing unusual about Harry's dying. Death is part of life. Psalmist Ethan the Ezrahite writes in Psalm 89: "Who can live and not see death, or who can escape the power of the grave?" All of us are dying from the moment of conception. We die at different rates. As I was reflecting on this, I walked from our local hospital to our home. I was there for a pre-op appointment before undergoing a sinus operation. Nothing serious, but, still, an indication of decline. Hospitals are places where we bravely put up a fight against death. And we get our temporary victories there, as well as a good number of defeats. Sometimes the hospital itself promotes the cause of death by spreading infectious disease. As I continued my walk, I came across a dead chipping sparrow. It looked beautiful, with its rusty cap and white eyebrow stripe and all the feathers neat and trim. But its body was lifeless. Death had overtaken also this part of God's creation.

What *is* unusual about Harry's dying is that it is *Harry* who is dying. Just ask his wife, Rose, or any of his children whether there is nothing unusual about their husband and father's dying. Just ask any faithful reader of *Christian Courier.* We love this man, this child of God, and we think we see a great need for the continuation of his fruitful life. We're not likely to portray Death as a chivalric gentleman who doffs his hat and invites us into his chariot. The Bible does not look upon death that way. We grieve and lament when we lose someone who is precious to us. Even God says in Ezekiel 18:32, "I take no pleasure in the death of anyone." Death is an invader in God's good creation, and it took the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus to conquer death and eventually remove it from God's new earth.

Death will die

We know that Death does not have the last word in our life. John Donne writes in "Death Be Not Proud,"

DEATH be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so,
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better then thy stroke; why swell'st thou then;
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

The poet here pokes fun at Death, and reminds Death that it keeps bad company: poison, war and sickness. He even goes so far as to say that we derive much pleasure from Death: rest of our bones and the delivery of our souls from pain and sorrow. Donne's hope lies in the resurrection: "One short sleep past, we wake eternally." He ends with the triumphal declaration "Death, thou shalt die."

No triumphalism

But in the meantime we are left with the statement: "And soonest our best men with thee do go." Is Donne expressing regret in this statement, the way we feel regret that a very dear and excellent editor is approaching the end of his life soon? Or is he saying that the best people are the most eager to be relieved from the burden of weary bones and restless souls? Keeping in mind his triumphalistic tone, I would say that it fits his bravado to challenge death by saying that the best among us are the least afraid of you, Death, and look forward to a speedy rest.

But somehow that kind of brave talk does not do justice to the pain of leaving dear ones behind and dropping the kind of work that Harry has loved for the past eight years – penning editorials, analyzing trends in our society and philosophizing about life. Not that John Donne wrote this poem lightly. He himself faced death at that time, and was firm in his faith in God.

We know that in the eyes of the Lord, the death of his saints is precious. But it is also a powerful witness to those who remain behind. Harry himself has been testifying of his unwavering faith in Christ in previous editorials, calmly dissecting the disease that racks his body and seeing a lot of humour even in his hospital stays. He is teaching us all how to face our own death. What is so remarkable about Harry is that he has changed so very little as far as his mind and spirit is concerned. Visits to him are fun, uplifting and worthwhile. There are always issues to discuss, opinions to challenge and funny incidents from the past to recall. In his own way, Harry is challenging death and declaring that death does not have the last word.

Culture of death

This is his and our answer to the culture of death that surrounds us in our society. We know that the creation is still being subjected to frustration and waits eagerly for the liberation of its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Romans 8:21). An editor especially takes note of the signs of decay: moral decay, social decay, economic decay, linguistic decay, esthetic decay, juridical decay, ecclesiastical decay, and physical decay. Newspapers and Internet loudly report or even further the decay of human life. In the midst of this cacophony of naysayers to life, of death lovers ("All who hate me love death," says Wisdom in Proverbs 8:36), of warmongers and covenant breakers, God calls us to choose life.

In Deuteronomy 30, Moses gives his farewell sermon to the Israelites as he, in the name of God, offers them life or death:

Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it....

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The struggle between life and death does not take place at the end of our lives. The time of choice is "today." This has always been the implicit as well as explicit message of *Christian Courier* during the 63 years of its existence, from the editorship of Rev. Paul de Koekkoek in Edmonton to its current editor Harry der Nederlanden: "Choose between life and death." It is our hope that the *Christian Courier* can keep on speaking that message into the lives of the upcoming generations. To this end, the board is meeting and trying to decide what our future course may be. Please pray for the board at this critical time. Pray especially for our friend Harry der Nederlanden and his faithful wife and coworker, Rose, as well as their children Nathan, Clarissa, Pamela and Jonathan and their partners and children.

If Death is not to be proud, we had better be faithful as we choose life!

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Canada

Letters

Redeemer remembers Dr. Theo Plantinga

Redeemer University College has lost one its longest-serving faculty members. Dr. Theodore Plantinga, Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department, died peacefully at his home in Dundas on the evening of July 4, 2008.

Dr. Plantinga's family and the Redeemer community plans to celebrate Dr. Plantinga's life and many contributions to Christian higher education in a memorial reception on **September 13, 2008, beginning from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m**.

Dr. Plantinga was Redeemer's first employee. In 1978, he was appointed Executive Director of College Development for the Ontario Christian College Association, founded to explore the possibility of starting a Reformed Christian liberal arts and science college in Ontario. He was also one of the eight original faculty members of Redeemer, and its first Registrar. He has had a lasting impact on Redeemer and on the thousands of students who passed through his Philosophy classes.

Dr. Plantinga had been struggling with the prostate cancer that first afflicted him a number of years ago. However, he was planning to teach again this upcoming academic year. He was just 61 years old.

Dr. Plantinga is survived by his wife, Janet, and his children David (Austin, Texas), Michael and Tamara (Denver, Colorado), and Abigail and Jeremy Byle (Winnipeg, MB). Theo was a step-father to five children, a brother to six siblings, and grandfather to Steven. He was predeceased by his first wife of 34 years Mary Plantinga, his daughter Elisabeth and his parents, Folkert and Anje Plantinga.

A "no-brainer" *cont. from page 3*

home when the kids left for school in the morning or got home at night.

I got a job with the public & Catholic school boards which would cover the tuition for the Christian school.

Soon after that, the government decided to include independent schools in support services so I could access a therapist at the school. No more driving everywhere to find appropriate and financially viable therapies anymore.

It was at this time that our oldest was ready for high school. Another decision – Christian or public school? The cost was a worry but God had been good to us so it was a "no-brainer!" This meant almost doubling the tuition so I had to find more work.

My husband was now fully employed and the decision to go back to school for a career change was a good one and he was happy in his work. I continued driving the school bus but was also able to work more hours at the bus garage, cleaning the buses. It was hard work and it kept me away from home all day. On the days I wasn't cleaning buses, I did some house cleaning for others. It paid tuition. I used to joke that all I did was wave at my pay checks as they went by from my employer to the school.

Time marches on and soon our oldest was looking at universities. This meant triple tuition for awhile! We had one son in grade school, a daughter and son in high school and a son in post secondary education. He had saved money from his part-time jobs so he was able to pay most of his university education himself with only a little help from us. By this time, I had found a full time job with the city driving the city bus which meant a big pay jump from school buses but it also meant full time work. The timing was perfect.

As I look back, I sometimes wonder how we ever did it. I regret being away so much from my children as they were growing up. I envied parents who could get their children up in the morning, could give them breakfast and send them out the door to school and those parents who were home when their children came home from school. I worked those hours and evenings were usually a rush to finish homework, do some housework and somehow finding time to do things at the church.

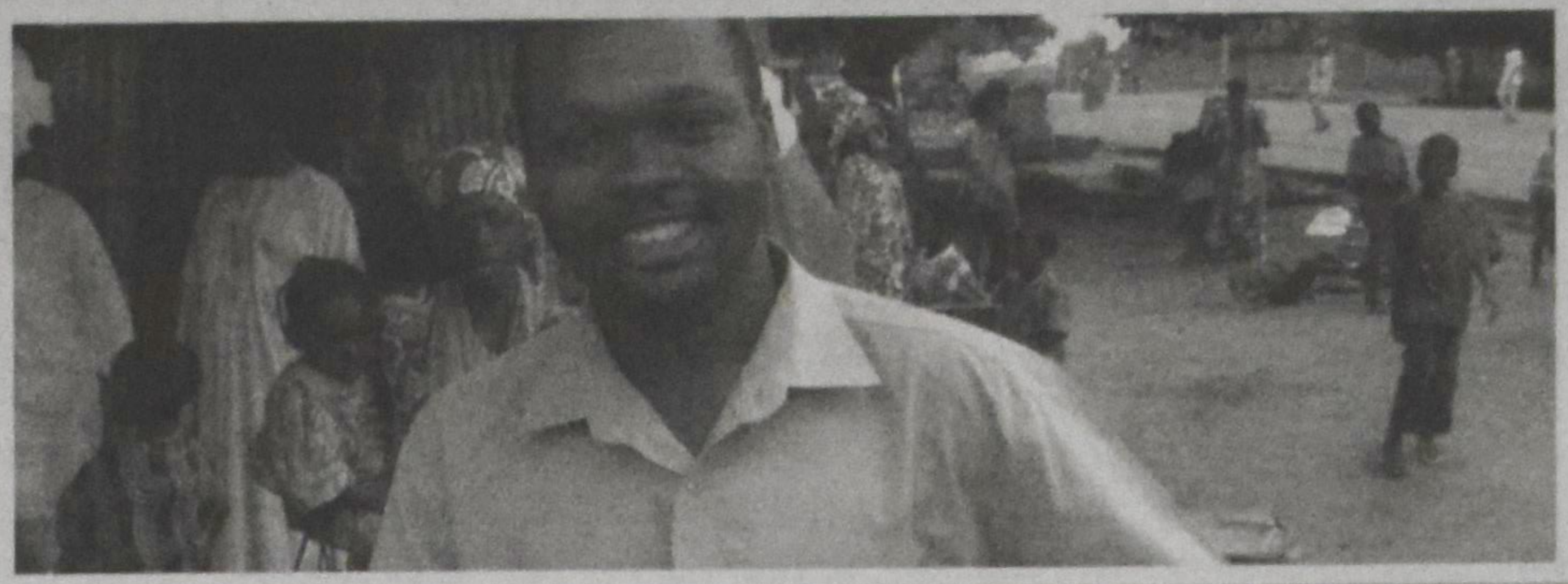
Today, I have only one left in the Christian school system. Our daughter is in university and the other two sons are working. I wrote a year's worth of checks for Christian school tuition for the last time this spring. Mark will graduate, God willing (and also him willing), next spring. Every year (even now), as I write out these checks for tuition, I wonder how we will ever raise the money every month. Yet every month, it seems to be there.

I have learned to trust in God for this and not to doubt. It is a huge amount. Once I added it all up and we could have paid our home twice over instead of struggling with a mortgage today. We never took fancy or exotic vacations and usually did some camping as a family in the summer.

All our clothes were usually handed down to us or bought at second hand shops. My children sometimes say that this was painful as they wanted some of the brand name clothing that others had but knew we couldn't afford unless I found it in between the racks of used clothing. I remember wondering how to pay for groceries, and meals could be meagre (hot dogs were a staple). I felt like the woman in 1 Kings 17, that baked a small cake of bread for Elijah. She had enough flour and oil for each day, never any extra but enough for each day.

God provided for her as he has for us. God provided the help we needed too, in the form of parents, therapists, special teachers, friends and other good supports. He is good. I wish I could say that I never worried or that I never lost any sleep worrying over finances. I did. Sometimes I wondered if it was really worth all the hassles and worries. Looking back though – I don't think I would have wanted it any other way.

For those who ponder the costs of Christian education, I can only say – do your best and trust God with the rest! He does provide.



Joyful news

Dear friends and supporters,

We have some joyful news from Niger we want to share with you! In the recent past we've shared the ministry of CORNERSTONE with you. Just to refresh your memory, CORNERSTONE is an association of Christian teachers in Niger who have a vision to start Christian schools across the country. CORNERSTONE has avoided the pitfall many national Nigerien organizations fall into, where organizations lose vision when they becomes focused on money. Instead of focusing on what they can get, CORNERSTONE members are focused on what they can give. They invest their own time and money to work towards the goal of starting Christian schools. During the rainy season break, members volunteered their time to teach language courses to people in the area and raised nearly $500. They even purchased a taxi to raise funds for schools!

Last week Wednesday, August 13, 2008 CORNERSTONE moved one big step forward toward realizing their dream. **The government of Niger granted them official status as a Nongovernmental Agency, paving the way for them to open their first school this fall in Niamey!** They've been praying and working for this day for two years.

CORNERSTONE attributes it's birth to the Christian world view teaching, CRC professor Jim Vreugdenhil introduced them to. Jim's teaching opened up new horizons, showing them that Christian education provides great hope for Christian transformation of young people even in a Muslim context. And so on December 19, 2005 the CORNERSTONE association was founded. The name CORNERSTONE was chosen because Christ is the cornerstone of every aspect of life, including education. Henry has been working with CORNERSTONE through team building and vision clarifying workshops.

Jim teaching

There is much work to be done to get ready for the day when CORNERSTONE will open the doors to their first school in September.

- Pray for unity of purpose for the CORNERSTONE team.
- Pray that their God given vision will continue to illuminate what they do.
- Pray for us as a CRC-Niger team as we consider partnering with CORNERSTONE, that God would give us his wisdom on the best way to proceed.

We look forward to sharing more with you on what God is going to do through CORNERSTONE and Christian education in Niger.

On another note, Ardell is scheduled to fly to Florida on August 21, 2008 to have work done on her jaw by a specialist. We are praying that this will be the solution to the dental problems Ardell has faced over the years. Ardell will be in St. Petersburg for 5 weeks.

Thank you for standing with us in the work of God's kingdom!.

Love in Christ,
Henry & Ardell Persenaire-Hogeterp
CRC-Niger

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Kuyper/Perspective

To be with the lord forever

And so we will be with the Lord forever.
Therefore encourage each other with these words.
1 Thes. 4:17b,18

It was God's pleasure to give his only Son, the precious Immanuel, as a focus for our soul; a centre for our desires, and an object for our love as his children.

Certainly the Lord God himself, as the eternal glorious Being, deserves our love and adoration with all the power and energy that our hearts can muster.

The Lord God continues to require that of all his children. As fountain of blessing and origin of all good things, he wants to be all in all. For every drop of love he pours into our selfish hearts, he watches closely whether the aroma of that love is directed back to him[1]. It belongs to him, who has created everything, including our love for him.

There must never be any doubt about that. When we speak of our heart being drawn toward Immanuel, then the Scriptures or God's children can have no other meaning, than what is expressed in the beautiful words of Jesus in Gethsemane, when he said, "He who sees me, sees the Father" [John 14:9]. Then we are truly united with Immanuel, so that through him we have access to the Father.

Those who wander onto the slippery slope of a sickly spirituality may think they should focus exclusively on Jesus as they view him independently from his relationship to the triune God. But when faith works powerfully and the waters of life refresh our soul, we will inevitably let go of such an unhealthy image of Jesus, and cling rather to the true Immanuel who always points us to the Father.

True religion drives the soul to seek the eternal Lord God in all we do; our worship must be focused on the eternal God in order to be fruitful. As the hart pants for the waters, so our souls seek the waters of life which flow freely from God, and are the only source of peace.

Thou shalt laugh

Eternal Student

Peter Schuurman

When I was a teenager I sought out the book *How to Be Funny: Discovering the Comic in You* by Steve Allen. This wasn't the beginning of some strange journey for me but rather one more way to respond to an odd impulse that gripped me since I was a small, skinny kid with bad teeth: an itch for the comic. Sure, I was bred within a weird and wonderful family of five unusual boys – something that might drive anyone nuts – but this was more than heredity, upbringing or a desire to escape.

Comics were sheer delight. I had a collection of *Archies*, *Richy Rich*, *Herman, The Far Side* and even the British *Beano.* My favourites were in fact the French *Asterix and Obelix* and the Belgian *Tintin.* There was more than just comics: I would listen religiously to nutty numbers on the weekly radio broadcast *The Doctor Demento Show* and I even found myself a little laughing machine I could make cackle uproariously in the most contagious way.

I was not only a consumer of humorous goods; I became a producer. Bob Wiersma – a local artist – offered cartooning lessons and I started to draw goofy pictures for the church bulletin, young people's events, and eventually the Redeemer College *Crown.* I developed a pen and ink portfolio for university. And I wasn't only doodling: I took the role of M.C. for a number of festive occasions. Things were starting to look really funny for me.

A turn to the Tragic

Two things happened that were low on the hilarity scale. The first was that I broke my leg really badly in grade 11, followed by a horrendous car accident in grade 13 that included two months in the hospital and a year of physiotherapy. I failed to see the humour in this, although it was there. (Incidentally, one of the bones I broke was my funny bone.)

The second issue was that I began to earnestly get involved in Christian ministry. Religion, as you know, needs to be approached with the seriousness of an undertaker. It is, after all, mostly concerned with what happens when you die. Laughter and comics are frivolous, light-hearted things, mostly related to nefarious Worldly Amusements, and are unrelated to the solemn, weighty Things of the Lord. As the great theologian Reinhold Niebuhr said, there can be some tittering in the vestibule of the temple, "but only faith and prayer, and no laughter, in the holy of holies."

The Bible itself, at first glance, doesn't seem chalk-full of giggles, either, especially if you highlight the wars, the rules, and an apocalyptic finish in fire and punishment. This was the feeling I got when I attended a Plymouth Brethren summer camp or my grandparents' Canadian Reformed Church – two places where sobriety and even hellfire loomed large.

I'm being a little facetious here, as you might guess. To be fair, I had a pastor with a great sense of humor named Herman Van Niejenhuis, and most of my early ministry was with children's camps and teen missions. Kids not only respond best to joy, but they elicit it from you.

Nevertheless, faith seemed heavy.

Comic relief

I'm swinging back towards the mirth of my childhood now. This is mostly due to a shift in perspective that oddly coincides with marriage to a woman named Joy and the birth of a smiling son (with another child due mid-September!)

Looking back, I believe at some less than fully-conscious level I had begun to truly believe that the giddiness of laughter was a distraction or escape from "real life" which was darker, heavier, and even unreasonably, randomly tragic. It was like a grey cloud descended and hung about my head.

Now I believe more the opposite: that laughter is not a disturbance of our true tragic condition, but is rather a signal of the greater reality of universal history. In fact, tragedy is the temporary condition, the parenthesis outside of which is divine joy.

Part of this conversion involves learning to forgive myself and others for dumb things we've done. We are human, which one writer has said is etymologically related to "humility" and "humour." The common Indo-European root, <u>*ghôm*</u>, is best translated by the English word "humus." Rotting vegetable matter. Dirt we are, and to dirt we shall return. We aren't just any dirt: we are dirt inspired with divine breath, or you might say divine *mirth.*

Calvin Seerveld put it best in a short article he wrote on comic relief. He maintains that:

Revelation shows unmistakably the childish folly of us two-legged people trying so hard to walk by ourselves and falling flat on our faces with our lion-tired rationalizations and our exaggerated estimate of our strivings. Revelation makes clear the joke God has played on humankind, how in a little Jewish baby God answered the questions that for centuries have taxed the brains of the greatest philosophers. And to top off the incongruity, for the ultimate rule of God's world God chooses, not the especially intelligent, gifted, or good-looking people, but the apparently foolish, the weak, the meek.... Disciples of Christ cut the figure of a clown in the world; they are buffoons, going the extra mile, turning the other cheek.

There is a holy foolishness that confounds the tragic wise. G. K. Chesterton put it succinctly: "a characteristic of the great saints is their power of levity. Angels can fly because they take themselves lightly…. Satan fell by the force of gravity."

There is a good Reformed introductory book with the title *The Drama of Scripture.* If the authors wanted to be more specific and say what *kind* of drama it is, they would be pressed to re-title it *The Comedy of Scripture.* For certain, each of the 66 books has a different flavour, including instructions, lament, and tragic story. But the whole sweep of the narrative, like a comedy, follows a "U"-shaped plot: it starts on a high note, takes you down to the depths, and then swings upward at the end. *Creation, fall, redemption.* We will no doubt hit rock bottom at times, but the ground is firm and sinks no deeper. The Good News is that in the twilight of time, Love wins. God reigns and the earth will be glad.

Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed Education Mission Leader and resides in Guelph, Ontario.

We may wonder why our desire is so strongly drawn to Jesus, and in a way that differs from our longing for God.

Let me use a little children here as an example. You could speak to children about an *Eternal Holy Being,* and they pray to God himself. They may be filled with awe and respect, but do not understand much of it, though they would like to and would try. They can imagine many things but cannot imagine God. To have a clear image of God they need a closer bond with the Almighty. For God the Holy One is too far removed and too exalted.

When you speak to those same children about Jesus, the picture changes. The name of Jesus has a completely different sound compared to the name of God.

The name of Jesus is sweeter and speaks to their hearts. They find it easy to exercise the imagination at the name of Jesus. Children may not have a complete or even an accurate picture but it will be very real to them. Children can imagine Jesus entering their bedroom, sitting on the side of their bed and kindly stroking their hair, whispering, "Sleep well, little one".

Your child could die peacefully with such a picture in mind.

What is the mystery here?

It is simply this.

In order to be able to think about the Eternal Godhead, your child had to imagine something, but cannot. But in Jesus the Eternal One himself provides us his image. Now the child has something concrete on which to base his imagination, a focus for its search. Even if the child can not understand or express it in so many words, it has found the key to the mystery, which is that by looking at Jesus, your child can see God. It happens unbeknownst to the child.

The moment the child 'sees' Jesus, he experiences communion with God.

Don't be too quick to say that it might be so for a child, but not for you. For then you would be mistaken. To be sure, you are not a child, and experience things differently. You are more conscious and better able to reflect on what happens in your life. Yet, in the end, what happens within you is the same as what happens in the child. You may have a sense of what the Eternal Godhead is, and some understanding apart from Jesus, but only when you have come close to Jesus, and are united with Immanuel, will you begin to grasp the magnitude of the love of the Lord God for you.

Please note here that you gain such insight not from Jesus' divine nature, but from his *human* nature. Just think it through! Suppose you should meet someone who has walked in the light and has not indulged in sin since his youth, if that person should have power to help you see the error of your way, and lead you into a relationship with God without drawing attention to himself, such a person would have brought you close to God, and this person would be 'like Jesus' to you.

Jesus, whose every word and kindly glance brings holiness and directs us lovingly to the eternal Father, also works a mysterious power in us. We may never fully understand it, but it does allow us to approach the holy One with confidence.

So there is no conflict between choosing for Jesus or God. No need to change our loyalty or focus on one or the other. But our gaze on Jesus has greater clarity, intensity and insight, and as we deepen our focus on him, we gain greater insight into the glory of God.

(Footnotes)

[1] *The word "aroma" appears 42 times in the NIV, mostly in Lev. and Numbers. – JVM*

This is part of a series of meditations by **Abraham Kuyper** *translated by Jack van Meggelen.*

DEBT CRAZY

Recently, at a niece's wedding the meal was smorgasbord style. Instead of being served and limited by a planned menu, a smorgasbord allows you to pick and choose and to dish it up yourself. There was a lot of food offered. As my wife and I made it past the tables, my wife looked at her plate and commented that her eyes are bigger than her appetite. That's the trouble when you try to sample something from everything on offer. It is hard to say "no" and limit yourself – especially when you've been waiting for a meal for some time (wedding pictures?) and your appetite is eager!

This is an apt picture of today's marketplace. There is so much on offer with easy and inexpensive credit to pay for it. Low financing for consumer credit has been a boon for sales – but it also makes it more tempting for us to buy more than we should. The result is that we take on too much debt. Like the 'extra tire' around our waist when we regularly eat too much, the lower cost of borrowing has increased the girth of our debt!

Last year, the Certified General Accountants Association of Canada published a report called: *"Where Does the Money Go: The Increasing Reliance on Household Debt in Canada."* I'm going to share some tidbits from this report here; however, you're most welcome to get your own copy (www.cga.org/canada/debt). If you're not computer savvy – this is the time to ask your child or grandchild to get you a copy.

A public opinion survey of Canadians was conducted. Consider the following from the report:

- 84% Canadians reported having some type of debt.
- 14% reported that their debt had markedly increased.
- 40% of Canadians holding debt think that debt negatively affects their ability to reach goals in the area of financial security for unexpected events.
- 28% of Canadians holding debt feel household debt negatively affects their ability to reach retirement goals.
- 25% of Canadians do not commit to any type of savings – not even for retirement.

The report goes on to report that Canadian household debt is at an all-time high, reaching $1 trillion in 2006. Comparable statistics from a paper on the Statistics Canada site called: "*The Wealth of Canadians: An Overview of the Results of the Survey of Financial Security* verify this trend to higher debt levels. According to this paper, *"Candians had debts estimated at $760 billion in 2005, three-quarters of which took the form of mortgages. This represented a 43.3% increase from 1999... The median value of mortgages in 2005 amounted to $93,000, up 17% from about $79,500 in 1999. Outstanding credit card and installment debt was up 58% from $16.3 billion in 1999. The median credit card installment debt rose to $2,400 in 2005."* One particular new development was the growth in line-of-credit debt, which grew by 77% in the same period. The median debt for this kind of credit rose from $5,800 in 1999 to $9,000 in 2005. This paper also indicated that the median debt load for family units grew from $32,300 in 1999 to $44,500 in 2005. Most of this extra debt was secured though residential assets.

Given the harm that the downturn in the American housing market has already done and the impact that the high cost of energy is having, many Canadian families may have put themselves at tremendous risk by taking on too much debt – especially if debt servicing costs should rise dramatically. From the statistics, it is clear that there is little to back them up in terms of savings for emergencies!

Given these trends and the current housing market downturn and high energy cost, caution is definitely in order if you're considering a major purchase through the acquisition of new debt. Consider alternatives and at minimum look for the least costly options. Our 'love affair' with technology makes us vulnerable to making purchases of new equipment, and that has been fed by the low cost of borrowing that we have been enjoying. Ultimately though, our ability to service the debt we take on is based on tomorrow's income – and only God determines the future. We need to be self-disciplined stewards, able to restrain ourselves as we walk by the table with all the enticing goodies! We need to take on a more debt-averse posture to become less debt-crazy!

Stewardly tip: Debt consolidation. Have you run up balances on your credit cards that you can't pay off when they're due? Do see the writing-on-the-wall as past excesses start to add up? You can probably benefit from a 'debt-consolidation' loan. **BUT**, and this is a **BIG** and important **BUT**: For debt consolidation to work you must make a **FIRM** decision (both you and your spouse) to curtail the use of those 'cleaned up' credit cards; better yet – cut up all but 1 to be used only for limited defined purposes). If you don't, you will probably make the situation worse for yourself in the future. Work with a credit counselor to help you get out from chronic and overhanging debt!

Readers: Share your 'Stewardly tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestions (by mail to *Christian Courier* or by email to my address below) and provide your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask you for more details.

Next issue: Self-driven Stewardship or…

Rick DeGraaf works for Christian Stewardship Services in Markham, Ontario Rick's email: rickd@csservices.ca

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Church

Just-begun Jamaican Bible translation sparks controversy

KINGSTON, Jamaica (CT) – The Bible Society of the West Indies and Wycliffe Bible Translators have sparked a national controversy in Jamaica by beginning to translate the Bible into patois, Jamaica's Creole language.

While English is Jamaica's official language, most Jamaicans speak patois. But that spoken language does not yet have a standard writing system. Those opposed to the translation project have argued in the country's newspapers and other media outlets that formalizing a written standard for patois would undercut efforts to promote Standard English.

Even Jamaican prime minister Bruce Golding joined the fray, saying in a June high-school graduation address that the $1 million, 12-year translation project "signifies an admission to failure" to properly learn and teach English.

Other critics have argued that as an obscure vernacular dialect, patois is incapable of communicating the deeper truths of Scripture. Many linguistic scholars, however, say patois, or Jamaican Creole, is an autonomous language rather than an English dialect.

Gerry Seale, general secretary of the Evangelical Association of the Caribbean, said a Standard English version of the Bible will stay popular in the country. But "so many Jamaicans speak patois rather than Standard English that this has a chance of communicating with their hearts in a much greater way than Standard English [does]," he said.

Jamaica Association of Evangelicals president Peter Garth says the organization supports the project largely because of the positive response the Jesus film received when it was released in patois. "We know that there are some problems in terms of the spelling and so forth, but what we do know is that it will attract a lot more readers," he said.

Debate about 'languageness'

Bertram Gayle, a member of Wycliffe Bible Translators Caribbean and coordinator of the Jamaican Creole Translation Project, noted that the debate surrounding the translation has thus far focused on the "languageness" of Jamaican Creole, while the primary aim of the project is spiritual.

"I'm confident that Scriptures in Jamaican will help strengthen and standardize the language, shed inherited colonial prejudice against the language, and provide material for literacy and education," Gayle said. "Most of all, however, [we] want Jamaicans to be able to identify somewhat with the linguistically diverse crowd of Acts 2:11. Bible translation agencies will tell you that the challenges encountered are insignificant in comparison with being able to hear God's Word in one's heart-language." The arguments are not new to Bible translators, said Wycliffe Bible Translators USA senior vice president Ruth Hubbard, and they are likely to intensify.

"The translation projects currently under way or yet to be done are also considered minority languages," she said. "They are communities within a larger context. In each of those cases, there is some tension: Should a lot of attention be paid to honoring minority languages, or should we push these communities to learn wider languages quicker so they can be part of the larger global community? Wycliffe says 'yes' to both questions."

"It might help people to remember that the Greek of the New Testament was not the Greek of literature but the common Greek of the street," said A. Scott Moreau, professor of intercultural studies at Wheaton College. "In that sense, translating the Bible into patois as a language of the people makes very good sense."

CRWRC celebrates $48 billion for AIDS relief

BURLINGTON, Ont. (CRWRC) – The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee is joining with the AERDO HIV/AIDS Alliance to celebrate U.S. President George W. Bush's reauthorization of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The Lantos-Hyde Bill (H.R. 5501) triples the amount of aid available to fight HIV, AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria over the next five years.

CRWRC is a Christian, nonprofit organization of the Christian Reformed Church in North America ministering in development, relief and justice education with people in need around the world. As a member of the Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations' (AERDO) HIV/AIDS Alliance, CRWRC has endorsed the compromise bill which expands the amount of funding available to fight AIDS from $15 billion starting in 2003 to $48 billion through 2012.

The new bill's broader language allowed for endorsement from faith-based organizations that take a variety of stances in HIV and AIDS prevention and education. "Passage of this bill is a huge victory for the faith community and all who engage in the struggle to end this pandemic or care for those affected by it," says AERDO-AHA chairman David Evens. "Millions of people will benefit from this legislation."

Active in Africa, around the world

With CRWRC, eight AERDO-AHA organizations currently implement PEPFAR grants collectively totaling more than $39 million in six countries. Lead agencies for these grants include Food for the Hungry, World Concern, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, World Hope International, and CRWRC. CRWRC receives PEPFAR funds through 2009 totaling nearly $7 million. The grants support the organization's AIDS programs in Haiti, Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia and Mozambique.

"As the relief, development and justice organization for the Christian Reformed Church in North America," says CRWRC US executive director Andrew Ryskamp, "CRWRC has actively implemented AIDS care and respite programs in Africa and around the world since the 1980s." In addition, CRWRC has launched the Embrace AIDS Campaign, a multi-million dollar, two-year fundraising effort that educates and activates North Americans about AIDS and AIDS response.

The campaign recently passed the $2 million mark toward its goal. CRWRC needs to raise an additional $1 million for Embrace AIDS in 2009. These new funds and the expanded PEPFAR legislation will help CRWRC maintain its current programming levels despite rising food costs, oil pressure and availability limits.

For more information about CRWRC, Embrace AIDS, or to download CRWRC's 2007 financial report, visit www.crwrc.org or call1-800-55-CRWRC. CRWRC is currently active in more than 30 countries and has a 45-year international reputation for "helping people help themselves."

Northern Ontario storms cause Cadet Camporee evacuation

BURK'S FALLS, Ont. (CRCNA) – More than 1,300 teenage boys and youth leaders from churches across the United States and Canada had to be evacuated two weeks ago from a park in northern Ontario due to heavy rain that turned the ground at their remote campsite into a sea of mud.

The boys, aged 11 to 16, were camping in Burk's Falls, north of Toronto, as part of the Camp Northern Lights Cadet International Camporee, an event of the Calvinist Cadet Corps. Held every three years since 1966, the camporee was cut short this year for the first time. Many of the cadets attending the event are members of Christian Reformed congregations.

"It was unfortunate," said Bob DeJonge, promotions chairman for the camporee, which began August 6 and was supposed to run through August 13. "You wonder why the good Lord allows something like this to happen. But a lot of positive things came out of it."

Instead of spending sunny days swimming, playing soccer, climbing rocks and shooting bows and arrows, the young people needed to band together to deal with the unrelenting rain. In the process, they forged friendships that they might otherwise have missed. At the same time, said DeJonge, they had a chance to see how hard adults and youth leaders worked to keep them safe. "It was just too cold and wet for the health of the kids to stay in the woods," he said. "Many of them had no dry clothes left."

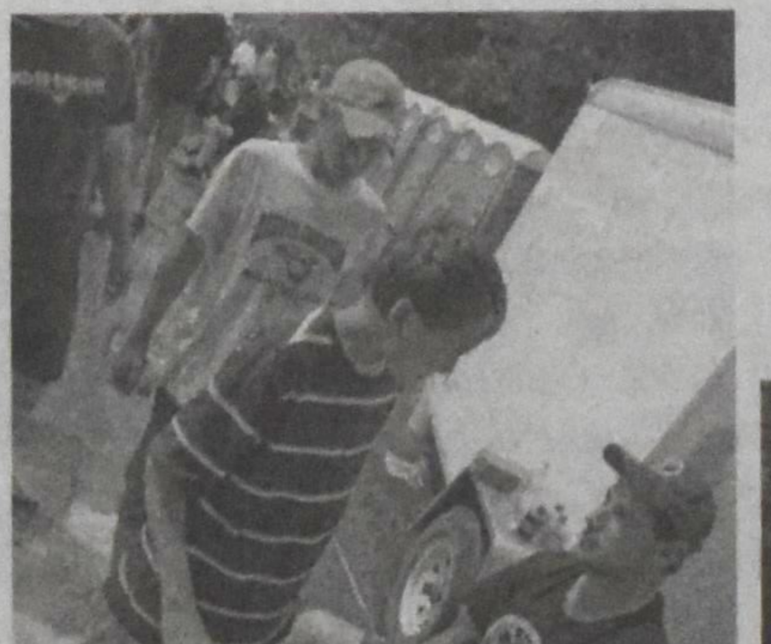
On the trail

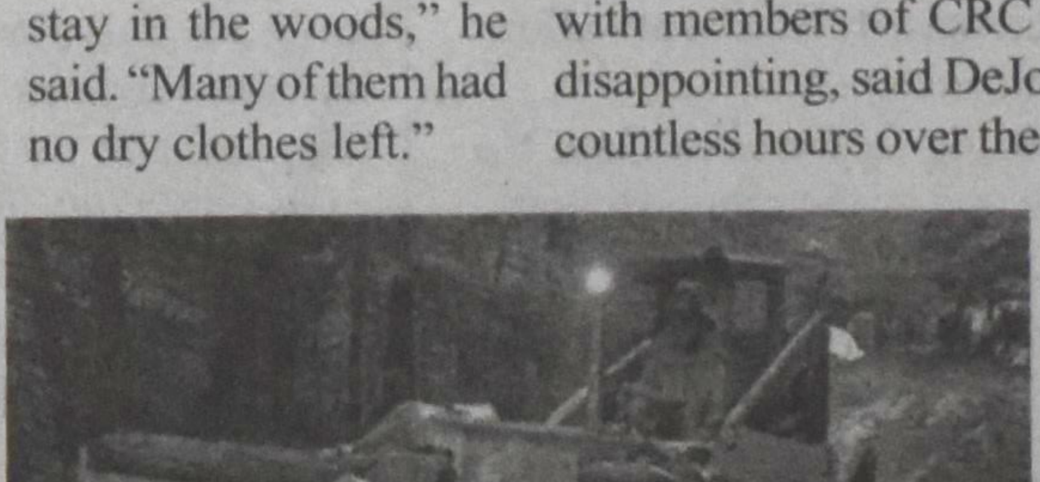
Some of the youth, however, reveled in the mud. They slid down hills and sloshed through puddles. Despite the soggy conditions and the need to evacuate the site on foot, no one was seriously injured, said DeJonge.

It took two days to evacuate the entire area. Many of the teens and adults stayed in an ice arena in nearby Sundridge, Ontario, on that Saturday night. A service was held in the ice arena on Sunday morning. By Sunday afternoon, most of the campers and the adults had left, either in church vans or in individual vehicles. Some campers awaiting flights home to California stayed with members of CRC congregations in the area. Especially disappointing, said DeJonge, was the fact that many men put in countless hours over the last three years preparing the campsite to accommodate the campers.

The Calvinist Cadet Corps is a youth ministry organization whose purpose is to provide the local church with a ministry program that will enable them to effectively share Christ's love with boys from their church and community.

Founded in 1952 for Christian Reformed boys as a kind of alternative to Boy Scouts, the Corps has more than 600 clubs throughout North America.


Foot washing


Using a Catepillar to get the luggage out of the site

'Heavenly fire ... shattered the terrain'

The 300th anniversary of English preacher William Grimshaw, friend to Whitefield, the Wesleys

HAWORTH, UK (EN) – The English village of Haworth and the literary Brontes are inextricably linked. Busloads of visitors from all over the world regularly visit this quaint part of Yorkshire.

The visitors slowly mount the steep cobbled Main Street and climb towards the Bronte museum. They wander around the old parsonage, reliving the sad short lives of the Bronte sisters, marveling at the creative genius that gave the English language such masterpieces as *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. Few of those visitors, however, have any idea of another scene that took place some 70 years before Patrick Bronte and his young family arrived in Haworth in 1820, a scene that explains why the Bronte family came to Haworth in the first place.

Traveling back in time to 1756 would allow visitors to witness a sight more astonishing and more significant than anything to be seen in the village today:

A vast crowd of men and women numbering almost 6,000 is patiently waiting, packed into the expansive graveyard surrounding Haworth parish church. Some are even clinging precariously to the church tower. Forgetful of the bitter winds sweeping down from the moors nearby, all are intent on listening to a preacher standing on a makeshift pulpit outside the church. That preacher is George Whitefield himself.

Beside Whitefield on the scaffolding pulpit stands a burly figure, William Grimshaw, the curate of Haworth. "Do not flatter them," Grimshaw cries to the preacher, "for I fear the greater part of them are going to hell with their eyes open." This brief glimpse from a moment in 1756 gives a vivid picture of the effects of William Grimshaw's ministry in Haworth begun 14 years earlier in 1742.

Searching for righteousness

On his arrival in Haworth Grimshaw could only count on only 12 regular communicants at his church's services, but the situation rapidly changed. Newly converted to God himself after a lonely and desperate seven-year search for peace of conscience and a righteousness that would make him acceptable in God's sight, Grimshaw's preaching was passionate, forthright and urgent. "He frequently rolled like thunder," said one who heard him, "but mingled tears like the Saviour's over Jerusalem with his severity." And as the people learned of the seriousness of their sins in the sight of God and the eternal punishment awaiting them apart from the forgiveness and mercy of God, they too wept with the preacher.

Before the year was out, the Haworth church was filled to capacity with hearers streaming into the village from a wide area. These were the early days of the 18th century evangelical revival when John and Charles Wesley were crisscrossing the country preaching with power and enormous effect wherever they could gain a hearing.

Suspicious at first of the "Methodists," as the Wesleys came to be called, Grim-shaw had guarded his pulpit carefully against such preachers. But, after meeting both John and Charles, a warm bond of fellowship and common endeavour was established, and Grimshaw himself became a Methodist – a term initially used to describe men and women touched by the new breath of spiritual life sweeping Britain.

Ordained but not converted

Born 300 years ago in September 1708, William Grimshaw, son of a farm worker, had been ordained in 1732 following his graduation from Christ's College, Cambridge. A casual, sport-loving young man, he did little for his first parishioners at Todmorden, near Halifax. Instead he spent his time hunting, fishing and socializing.

To refrain from entering the pulpit drunk was the highest extent of his resolutions, until God intervened in his life in a remarkable way. When at last he became aware of his woeful spiritual deficiencies, Grimshaw knew of no one who could help him. The death of his young wife after only four years of marriage, leaving him with two small children, sank him into dark despair. Desolate and even suicidal, he struggled to appease God's wrath against his sin by means of his upright lifestyle. But, inevitably, he constantly fell short of his own standards, and, of course, God's.

Willing to renounce self

But early in 1742 he found relief when he unexpectedly came across a book by the great Puritan theologian, John Owen, entitled *Justification by Faith*. As Grimshaw anxiously turned its pages he discovered the answer to his need: Christ had satisfied God's righteous demands on his behalf. With joy and relief he could exclaim, "I was now willing to renounce myself, every degree of fancied merit and ability and to embrace Christ only for my all in all. O what light and comfort did I now enjoy in my own soul, and what a taste of the pardoning love of God."

Freed from the crushing burden of guilt, Grimshaw remarried and accepted the invitation to become curate of Haworth. So began a 21-year ministry which would leave an imprint on that whole area of Britain, and one that would eventually lead to the appointment of the evangelical Patrick Bronte in 1820. Even the late Poet Laureate Ted Hughes (1930-98), brought up near Haworth, was aware of Grimshaw's influence and could speak of his "heavenly fire... which shattered the terrain into biblical landmarks." Enjoying all the prestige and deference paid to an 18th-century cleric, Grimshaw's methods of retaining discipline in his parish became legendary. Some of the anecdotes, told and retold, are tinged with myth, or have been exaggerated by his opponents with the passing of time, but many are essentially factual. Although Grimshaw did not horsewhip reluctant parishioners into church as novelist Elizabeth Gaskell maintains, he was quite able to use a horsewhip on thugs who were assaulting defenceless people as they entered a cottage for a prayer meeting.

'I cannot do enough for my Lord'

Because the canon laws of the Church of England restricted a preacher from ministry beyond the bounds of his own parish, Grimshaw was at first reluctant to preach anywhere apart from Haworth. But after 1747 his friendship with the Wesleys and his intense concern for the souls of the people gave him courage to flout such restrictive laws – cost what it may in terms of persecution and hostility from neighbouring clergy. So was born what was called the "Great Haworth Round."

And great it was. Grimshaw and his assistants could be found preaching across a wide geographical area to congregations large and small, in cottages, barns or in the open air. During an "idle" week he would often preach 14 times, and more than 20 times during a "busy" week. And always he could be found back in Haworth on a Sunday, sometimes preaching four times. Declaring his supreme motivation he would say, "I cannot do enough for my Lord Jesus who has done so much for me."

Unfazed by 'sheep stealing'

One of Grimshaw's outstanding characteristics was his genuine love for all true believers, whatever their denominational label. "I love them and will love them and none shall make me do otherwise," he declared. Once he told his friend John Newton that at least five Dissenting congregations had sprung from his own ministry. Men whom he had influenced had become either Baptist or Independent. Even when his young convert James Hartley began a Baptist cause in Haworth itself, he could say with generous exuberance, "God bless thee, James; God bless thy undertaking. Perhaps God has given thee more light than he has given me. God bless thee."

With the Wesley brothers, and particularly George Whitefield, as frequent visitors to Haworth, vast congregations would gather. Many conversions took place leading to significant changes in the lives of the people. "What has God wrought in the midst of these rough mountains!" exclaimed John Wesley as he visited Haworth in 1761.

Anticipated early death

William Grimshaw had only two more years to live. Even though he was not yet 55, he anticipated an early death, his health undermined by his exhaustive work. "'I expect my stay on earth to be short and will endeavour to make the best of a short life, and so devote my whole soul to God so as not to go creeping to heaven at last," Grimshaw would say. So, when an epidemic of typhus fever swept through the village in 1763, he was not surprised that he succumbed to the infection. Hearing that Grimshaw was seriously ill, Benjamin Ingham visited him. "My last enemy has come," Grimshaw declared, "the signs of death are on me, but I am not afraid! No, blessed be God, my hope is sure and I am in his hands."

Long meditation on death and on the joys of the world to come had prepared William Grimshaw to face this last enemy without flinching. His words to Henry Venn are those of a man of rock-solid faith. Despite a burning fever and violent headaches, he announced, "I am as happy as I can be on earth and as sure of glory as if I were in it."

Grimshaw asked Venn to conduct his funeral and to preach on words of the apostle Paul that had been his guiding beacon ever since his conversion: "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Downloadable Bible study helps readers 'get to know Jesus'

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. (ChristianNewsToday) – Glen Copple, pastor of New Hope Gospel Ministries here, has begun releasing his 12-volume online Bible study/commentary series called "Getting to Know Jesus." The series discusses every event in the life and teachings of Jesus from the perspective of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each event is positioned side by side with the respective Gospel passage in which it is recorded so that the reader can see how the stories are told from each author's unique point of view.

Lessons also include a verse-by-verse commentary explaining the text, as well as discussion and homework questions to make the learning experience complete. Also included are full color photos showing where that event occurred in Palestine of Jesus' day, complete with charts and maps.

Volume 1, available for free download from www.gettingtoknowjesus.org takes the reader through the annunciation, birth and childhood to the baptism of Jesus at age 30. The volumes are also available in print.

Glen Copple has served as a pastor for almost 20 years in churches in Kansas, Missouri and California. His series makes use of that experience. According to Copple, "In my years in ministry serving many churches nationwide, I've observed that many people believe in Jesus, but they know very little about his life and teachings. They believe in him, but they have never engaged in a study of his life to really learn the events and see how they apply to our lives today. That's why I wrote what [this] non-denominational, 12-volume Bible study series."

The series has been called Bible based, engaging, creative and practical.

Intangible Things

Heidi VanderSlikke

Pre-holiday havoc

Jack and I plan to take off shortly on a two week motorbike trip through the Maritimes. As usual, there's too much to do in too little time before we leave. Knowing this week would be a challenge, I asked several of my friends to keep me in prayer. This is my open letter of appreciation to them.

Dear friends,

Thank you for praying for me today. I can't tell you how much it means to me, knowing that my friends are interceding on my behalf. Seriously. But I'm not going to lie to you. Today was a ROTTEN day! Who knew getting ready for a holiday could be so much work?

That's right. Murphy's Law prevailed. I spent much of this morning working on minutes and some writing that needed to be done after last night's committee meeting. I'm the secretary. And I can't leave these details unattended for the next two weeks while I gallivant all over the East coast on my motorbike, can I? The sun shone through my office window and things hummed along fairly well. Until I looked at my computer screen and the top half of it was black. Completely blank. The bottom half was fine. Now is the cup "half empty" or "half full?" you may ask. Half a screen is good for nothing, I would tell you.

So I shut off the screen, prayed, and turned it back on again. It came up with half still missing. I rebooted the computer. (Ever had to guess where the "turn off computer" icon is?) The screen returned to life still only half there, then flickered hopefully and at last gave me a full picture. With a thankful sigh, I carried on with my work.

All the while, Prince Farming hauled manure out of the chicken barn and spread it on the recently harvested wheat field. When he came in at noon I felt I shouldn't complain about my day, considering that he was having literally "tons" of fun. At least I'd had the forethought not to hang the wash out on the line today.

After lunch I shifted my focus to farm bookkeeping. I had a small (I thought) glitch with the GST account in the General Ledger. QuickBooks indicated the government owed us about twice as much money as what I knew to be correct. With no desire to bilk "Caesar" out of his due (and even less desire to bring a Revenue Canada audit upon my head), I called the accountant. What should have been a short conversation turned into an hour long session of repeated phone calls and adjusting entries. He's a nice man, just not that much fun to talk to, especially considering his hourly rate.

When that was over I thought I should pray for myself. Flexing my shoulders several times to ward off the imminent spasms, I closed my eyes, bowed my head and asked the Lord to send some relief for the tension welling up inside of me. I thanked him for his faithfulness and goodness, and for the fact that I can always trust him to work all things (even GST imbalances) for my good and his glory.

I hopped on my bike and rode to the mailbox. Maybe there would be a cheque in it. Yes, there was! But there was also a notice from the Chicken Farmers of Ontario that we have been flagged for yet another HACCP audit. Shorter than the one I suffered through last winter, this will still be a time consuming process. And it must be completed and returned within two weeks. (Insert scream here.)

For all you non-farmers, HACCP is the food safety certification program to which farmers must adhere. It involves hours of documenting meticulous agricultural practices which we have routinely carried out for years; only now we have to write them all down to make the consumer feel as if Canada's food supply is much safer than it ever was in the past. Please remember that the next time you hear someone accuse us of pumping our chickens full of growth hormones, okay?

So when Jack showed up for his afternoon coffee, he was looking at one unhappy face across the table. Seeing the pity in his eyes, I figured this was a good time to tell him I couldn't order a birthday cake from the Harriston Bakery. Apparently they need more than one day's notice. I sighed deeply and wondered aloud what to do, since I really had no time to bake. He immediately pulled out his cell phone and called Stephanie at work to ask her to pick one up on her way here tomorrow night. What a guy.

I spent the rest of the afternoon making phone calls, putting the bills in order, adding to my Essential-To-Do-List and trying to figure out how to fit a week's worth of work into a three-day slot. At the supper table Jack gave thanks for the food (steak, salad, fresh corn and tomatoes from the garden) and then he prayed especially for me. This, of course, sent me bolting to the Kleenex box and out of the kitchen. For dessert he offered to delay our departure for a couple of days. No wonder I think he's a prince.

Yes, it's been a tough day. But it's over. *All's well that ends*, as they say. And I have bright hope for tomorrow. It's my birthday. I'll spend it scraping chicken manure off of barn floors. Big fun, eh? To be honest, I had been wishing tomorrow wasn't my birthday. I didn't feel like celebrating. But as I took Rocky for his sunset walk, I apologized to God for that attitude. I have much to be thankful for. Tomorrow I will work side by side with the man of my dreams. In the evening my kids will be here, taking time from their own busy lives to eat pizza with me. Mom and Dad and my sister-in-law will come for coffee and the cake Stephanie brings. Friends will call and send cards and e-mails. And I will honestly give thanks, from the bottom of my barnyard heart, for all these fifty-two years that God has so graciously given, not to mention that the best is yet to be.

So thanks again for your prayers today. (And keep at it!) Know that for all my complaining, when I count my blessings, you're included among them. Now look at that – I think I've got my column ready to go. Bring on the balloons.

With love and a great big smile from the birthday girl,

Heidi

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Getting real with menfolk

Mildred Budge

"I don't think he really meant to pat me on the fanny. I think he's short and that's where his hand landed," Mildred Budge explained to her best friend Fran.

"Get real, Sister," Fran said, taking hold of an expression that their friend Marjorie had introduced at the last Lunch Bunch meeting when she explained how she survived her ordeal at the hospital after a heart attack ('I said to myself: Get real Marjorie, or you won't walk out of here.'). Marjorie had walked out with the power of getting real energizing her. Her friends respected it, and had been taking 'get real' surveys of themselves since then.

"You are not that tall, Mildred Budge, and the man who patted your fanny was not that short. Get real," Fran repeated, smacking her lips. She liked the expression quite a lot.

"Well, he was German, and maybe in Germany men pat women on the fannies in what is considered respectful admiration," Mildred replied ruminatively. She would have let the fanny-patting incident go undiscussed if it had not been observed. But Fran had seen it happen at the reception after a concert, and had a lot to say about it since then. While Mildred valued the counsel of her best friend, sometimes it was easier to get real alone.

"What universe do you live in? Fran asked, standing still. A pose of stillness was unusual for Fran, who was known far and wide as a mover-and-a-shaker.

"I live in this universe, but I have never understood men very well. You know that," Mildred replied peacefully.

"The problem you have with men is they aren't so mysterious. Sure, they don't discuss feelings as easily – generally speaking – and, they don't like to come to Sunday school as naturally as some women – generally speaking – which is why we have a special class of husbands who have been prayed into a Sunday school by their wives; and men – generally speaking – might knock on a bathroom door loudly even though they know you're in there when you've asked him for all of your entire married life not to do that. But, after you have become acquainted with these little, little differences, you would rightly know, Mildred Budge, that no man would pat a woman he doesn't know very well on her petrushka."

Part of Fran's mover-and-a-shaker reputation was built on her innate ability to spontaneously invent words that sounded like what she meant. Mildred thought Fran's invention for hiney sounded more Russian than German, but in the world of the American deep South where strong consonants and elongated vowel sounds move easily from speech to song and helped invent the music that originated in the South – the Blues, Mildred understood that Fran was talking about any behind – any nationality.

As if reading her mind, Fran shook her head, made that tsk-tsk-tsking sound she clucked when she was feeling sorry for how naïve her friend was, and said, "Well, the German was not in love with you, Mildred. You do know that, don't you?"

Mildred nodded, of course. She had never thought he was. She would not have thought much about the pat if Fran had not seen it happen and kept bringing it up.

"I suspect, Millie – and I'm sorry that I have to be the one to tell you this – that he simply saw your belvedere, liked the shape of it, and gave it a pat. You've been walking a lot, and your belvedere has tightened up."

Mildred's newly tightened derriere had been undeniably transformed by a rigorous walking program that had, in an age when miracles were supposed to be over, reduced her clothing size. In the course of her dedicated morning walks, she had found herself, upon rare occasions, possibly running, too. Mildred did not report that she was jogging because she wasn't sure she was. For most of her life she was known as a notoriously slow walker and it was possible that she was only walking faster than she ever had before, and the increased tempo now felt, to her, like running.

She was curious about the truth – wanted to get real. There were a couple of times during these brief bursts of what felt like speed on her morning walk that she wanted to ask another exerciser as she passed them by, "Am I running or still only walking?" But even she knew that others would not be able to process that question and answer it without becoming suspicious of her mental capability and then might try to lock her up in the

Transformation

institution that Marjorie had successfully escaped; getting real was harder than one might suppose.

"You were a temptation, Mildred. And the German succumbed to it. Does that help you to understand this matter of the flesh?" Fran pressed.

It had been a long time since Mildred had thought of herself as a temptation to anyone. Rather, she had reached an age where she more often heard that she reminded people of their mothers. They usually wanted advice or a recipe, and it was usually the kind of advice she seemed to have or a recipe for banana bread that she could easily find.

And then that nice German man had sat beside her at the concert and then later at the reception had told her stories of his travels, and she had been enraptured with all of the places he had been. Even though she had to look down to make eye contact with him, she had not been uncomfortable, not like she was in some close quarters with other men, particularly men in the church who had been trained by every pastor whose unsmiling likeness was hung in the series of portraits on the parlour wall at church to never be alone with a woman and if you are, make sure the door is open and stay on your feet. Avoid even the appearance of evil!

There was something to be said about discretion between the sexes but a time too (though there was nothing about it in Ecclesiastes), to be together fearlessly – not so much fearless of sin but not afraid of what you will do. Getting real with herself, Mildred Budge was not afraid of what she might do under any circumstances, and she had not been afraid of the implications of the fanny pat either while it happened or since it had been dissected by Fran.

In Fran's presence – and because she respected Marjorie's emphatic recommendation that everyone should get real about their daily truths – Mildred's mind roamed around words under which to file the fanny-patting incident. She thought of temptation, sin, inappropriate, and then the truest word that catalogued her own response: affectionate.

It had been a quick, friendly move, she thought, more like a fond wave of farewell that had landed on her belvedere. There was no insult intended, she thought; and she had not taken any.

She would have told Fran that, but she understood that Fran believed that any lady – any got-real Christian lady – should have been indignant over such an outrage.

But Mildred was not indignant. Not outraged – just felt the warm genial glow of the German's eyes. At the end of their conversation because they would never see one another again, they had shared a clumsy ta-ta embrace, and as they parted, his hand had slipped off her waist, and finding itself in a strange place, had patted her twice – bye-bye – and then his hand withdrew while his eyes continued to smile as if to say 'Pardon me. *I meant no disrespect.*'

She had walked away smiling with her dignity in tact, and smiling more than a church lady usually did for she had not only been seen and heard and talked with, but touched companionably, like an old friend.

Like players do on the football field.

Like guys on the basketball court.

Like baseball players who are called 'safe' by the umpire.

Like that.

Yes, like that.

She wanted to tell Fran that – that not all touching is axiomatically sin – that there can be something 'safe' that adds something bright like a candle's glow to unexpected moments, but Fran wasn't finished. "Do you remember how that guy tried to get you to go on a ride on his motorcycle and you thought he was asking you for directions. I had to explain that to you, too."

Mildred had forgotten about the man on the motorcycle, but when she remembered the tattooed man with the long flowing hair and the toothy smile, she could not stifle the smile that came with the remembered surprise when he had zoomed up to her in front of the drug store and had asked her if she wanted to hop on and ride to Birmingham. "I don't know the way to Birmingham," Mildred had said. She did know actually, but she couldn't remember which way to go in that moment.

"You'd be married today if you just lived in the same universe with the rest of us. But you don't," Fran declared. "But that's okay. I'll keep explaining how it all works to you, until you understand."

Getting real, Mildred doubted that. Doubted that everything that happened between men and women all the time could be understood and filed away in a perfect category, and when she thought about some of her warmest memories, none of them seemed to fit a place where in the explaining – of getting real – someone else could understand what 'it' had meant to her.

"What are you thinking about Mildred Budge? Have you told me everything?" Fran asked.

Mildred offered her a mysterious imitation of the Giaconda smile, and Fran shook her head, wagged a finger, and warned, "You better get real, Mildred Budge because for the record, Mildred – you are so not a biker chick."

AN EXTERNAL FORM OF PIETY

...or real personal transformation?

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

There is no deep knowing of God without a deep knowing of self and no deep knowing of self without a deep knowing of God.
John Calvin

A humble self-knowledge is a surer way to God than a search after deep learning.
Thomas à Kempis

Grant, Lord, that I may know myself that I may know thee.
Augustine's prayer

K.D. Benner, a well-known retreat leader and author of "The Gift of Being Yourself," believes our contemporary church has forgotten the above ancient emphasis on how important it is to know God as well as ourselves. He believes we have focused on knowing God and tend to ignore knowing ourselves. He further believes the consequences have been devastating – marriages betrayed, families destroyed, ministries shipwrecked and endless numbers of people damaged. He makes clear that focusing on God while failing to know ourselves, produces an external form of piety that leaves a gap between appearance and reality.

Benner stresses many of us are not short on *objective knowledge* about God as well as our selves. But *none* of this type of knowledge, may do us any good since not all knowledge transforms! Some merely puffs us up like an overfilled balloon. And we know what happens to overfilled balloons! Still, he warns against another imbalance…not looking at God while looking at ourselves, which can easily lead to self-preoccupation or self-fixation. In other words, a sensible balance between wanting to know God *and* self can lead to a *transformational knowing* that allows us to live more healthy lives.

Experiences transforms

At the same time, Benner writes transformational knowledge is always personal, not objective. It involves *knowing of*, not merely *knowing about*. In other words, *experiencing* God's love is totally different from *hearing about* about God's love. Benner uses the example of 'I know my wife loves me because of my experience of her. While I can describe her love to someone else, I cannot prove it. I cannot make it objective. Yet this does not detract from the validity of my knowing.'

How often don't we talk about 'who God may be'…(ideas about God) but rarely talk about having direct *experiences* of God. Yet, it is these experiences that actually transform us into authentic people. A good example of this process is Peter, the disciple who betrayed Jesus three times. When he realized what he did he was filled with regret and anguish. Not only did he have to accept his own lack of courage and loyalty, he also had to acknowledge the depths of his own fear of survival. In short, because of his betrayal of Jesus, he had to face the weakest part of himself – a deeply, painful process.

For us, modern men and women, the journey towards discovering ourselves is no less painful. Most of us fight tooth and nail to avoid facing our weaknesses. We prefer to stress our strengths. But the book "The Wisdom of the Enneagram: The complete guide to Psychological and Spiritual growth for the nine personality types" by Don R. Riso and Ross Hudson can be a gentle guiding light to make us realize how fruitful and challenging our lives can be if we would only be more honest with ourselves.

More specifically, and as mentioned in last month's column, self-awareness is the first step towards getting to know oneself especially in terms of our thoughts, attitudes, feelings and interactions with family, friends and the world at large. Workshops or self-help books can also help us put various puzzle pieces together. But equally important is becoming more aware of how we see and experience God and how we understand our faith in terms of how we need to live our lives.

Sometimes, the difficulty for Christians in becoming authentic is because we continue to punish ourselves (and others) for our failures and disappointments in life, especially in terms of broken marriages, messy family relationships, failures at work, or just being a disappointment to loved ones. If we can accept the role we possibly played in these failures without being defensive or blaming of others, we can actually allow them to become learning experiences that help us come to terms with a part of ourselves that needs to grow or change. Our failures then become lessons we learn in life so we can go forward in a more healthy way. This change of attitude also has much to do with our ability to ask for forgiveness and consequently, experience the redemptive love of God.

In conclusion, Benner encourages us to come out of hiding. He believes as long as we try to pretend things are not as they are, we choose falsity. But God wants something better. True authenticity can only be developed through acknowledging our weaknesses. And having a redemptive God at our side is not only humbling – but also truly inspiring!

Arlene Van Hove is a therapist and a member of the Fleetwood CRC. She can be reached at avanhove@shaw.ca

Corinthians

The negative will be made positive

"For he has put everything under his feet."
I Corinthians 15:27

A. A. van Ruler

Earlier Paul has explained that an enormous life-giving work spreads out from Christ's resurrection. But this work is not completed in one stroke. Everything happens in its own time. The whole of created reality must be liberated from all forms of corruption piece by piece.

Meanwhile the risen and glorified Christ is ruling. He is ruling in the midst of his enemies, namely, the powers of corruption that have held God's creation in thrall. These are gradually being overcome. The last enemy to be dethroned is death. It is the enemy that obviously has given Christ the most trouble.

We might say that death is a power that keeps escaping God's judgment on the other powers, namely, on the power of sin. Therefore all the other powers must first be broken inwardly before this can happen to death.

And that is precisely what will happen, says Paul. Even the last enemy death will be overthrown, for God has truly put everything under Christ's feet. No exceptions. Not even death escapes.

We can therefore be certain that some day the problem of death will also be resolved. It takes a long time. We will not see it in our lifetimes. For it doesn't even happen in the hour of our death. As long as we are alive and even when we are dying death seems to rule unhindered.

But in both life and death we must put our expectations on Jesus Christ. One day he will break the rule of the last enemy. God has put him also under Christ's feet.

There is thus something triumphalist in the gospel and in the Christian faith. There are no exceptions. There is nothing we need renounce. We confess a Lord to whom all things are subject, even the terrible, the shadow side, the negative things of reality, the hostile powers. This is why God gave us Christ as Lord. He has come because of sin and of everything associated with sin. All of this has been put under his feet.

Therefore when we stand in faith we can stand only positively. There isn't a single thing, no matter how terribly deep and dark, that falls outside his rule. And his rule is one of grace and life. The last thing is the light of the resurrection. It remains true through everything, even through the darkness of death.

Note that to express these things Paul borrows a couple of words from Psalm 8:6: "You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet." But this passage is speaking of man. It is he who stands amidst the boundless universe. He is nothing in himself, but he has been made almost divine. This divinity derives from the fact that God gave him dominion over everything and has put everything under his feet.

Psalm 8, we might say, is about culture. This is where mankind rules over all of created reality. And this is according to God's purposes; it is God who made man almost divine.

I suspect this is deliberate: Paul has the feeling that God's purposes with mankind in terms of culture will never wholly be realized and fulfilled. Mankind falters at the last moment. He gives up. He rebels. He is disobedient. As a result, the whole of God's glory unfurled over the earth becomes obscured, darkened. This is why God sent the Messiah. He doesn't give up. He is obedient, even to the end, through the negative – to death, even to death on the cross.

Jesus raising Jairus' daughter

Only in this way is man's calling fully fulfilled and only in this way does he reach his destination. Christ's complete obedience brings his complete rule over all things. Now Christ can also take on the hostile powers that man is unable to stand up to.

The intention is, of course, that Psalm 8 will also be fulfilled. Through the gospel and in the kingdom of Christ, culture is also rescued. In communion of faith with the Messiah, man will eventually also overcome all negativity and come to his royal destiny to rule over all things and to be God's co-worker. When the gospel permeates earthly culture like yeast, we already see bits and pieces of this. In the kingdom of glory we will see it in its full splendour. The kingdom of glory is that of those risen from the dead and redeemed, and of a fulfilled and consummated culture.

In this connection, we must also note that we can never be wholly certain who it is that puts everything "under his feet". Is it God the Father? Or Jesus Christ?

Verse 27a seems to refer to God the Father. He has put all things under Christ's feet.

But this is not the end of the matter. This means that God the Father has ordained and destined to make all things, also the powers, subject to Christ. But this decision and judgment of God must now be carried out by Christ himself.

This is Christ's kingdom. His rule is a continuing battle, a never-ending struggle to overcome all things and all powers. This demands time. The whole of human history is needed to do it, including the return of Christ, the last judgment and the resurrection of the dead. God never does anything with the wave of a magic wand. Whatever he has decided he extrudes over time's duration.

In faith we ought to participate in God's patience. We are part of the militia Christi, joining Christ in the great battle against the hostile powers.

Let me clarify this further by focusing on Paul's word choice. He does not just say that the enemies will be dethroned, that is, that their rule will be broken and crushed and brought to nothing. He also says that these enemies will be put under Christ's feet, that is they will be turned into a footstool for Christ and therefore may still be usefully employed in his service.

This is a huge thought: the powers, God's enemies, the negativity in being will be harnassed for positive ends in the kingdom of God. Then they are no longer negative and destructive, but they will also be made positive and used to build up the kingdom.

This thought is especially huge when we come to the last enemy, death. By Christ's resurrection power, death too in one way or another will get a positive meaning. It means the end of sin, the passage to eternal life, the final form of the highest kind of love.

To travel that far requires a long time. We human beings need an entire lifetime to be positively prepared for death. This reflects the nature of Christ's kingdom: he rules and struggles to make his enemies into a footstool and thus to work out God's decisions in reality.

Translated by Harry der Nederlanden

When the ~~cobbler's~~ pastor's family goes without shoes

The need to care for the pastor's family

Rachel Boehm Van Harmelen

"The blacksmith's mare and the shoemaker's bairns are aye the worst shod," proclaims an old Scottish proverb. When members of a Christian Reformed Church (CRC) pastor-spouse peer learning group saw themselves in this proverb, they decided to do something about it. Neglect of marriage and family happens far too often in pastor's families, they say.

Meeting together to discuss their work and home lives, the members of the peer group say they quickly came to realize that the health of a pastor's marriage and family life is an important determinant for the health of ministry. "We realized that many church councils weren't taking seriously enough the task of caring for the pastor and the pastor's family," says Rev. Ed Gerber, a member of the group. "We also concluded that many pastors neglect to care for their marriages and families to the extent that they should."

In response, the pastors set out to create a training tool on the topic of marriage and ministry, jointly contributing content for a publication that urges pastors and councils to work together to create conditions where both the pastor's marriage *and* the church's ministry can thrive.

"Ministry is hard," explains Gerber. "Ministry with a strained marriage can be harder still. Experience has taught us that healthy marriages contribute to healthy homes and healthy children, and happy homes support and contribute to healthy and vibrant pastoral ministries." Gerber points out that the training tool they created is based on a simple concept. "A pastor with a healthy marriage is better equipped to provide effective leadership for the church," he says.

"It could be said that neither a pastor nor a pastor's family has a pastor," says Rev. Stan Sturing, one of the training tool's authors. "We don't want the pastor's family to go without spiritual care because the pastor is busy taking care of everyone else except himself or herself and his or her family. It takes time to work on relationships."

The needs identified by the pastors and their spouses are also ones that resonate with the peer learning group's mentors, well-known author Eugene Peterson and his wife, Jan. The peer group spent time with the Petersons discussing the topic of marriage and ministry during a retreat in Montana. The Petersons also wrote the forward for the training tool, a publication which they refer to as "most timely." And, after 50 years of being married and in ministry, the Petersons speak from experience.

"Elders and deacons routinely pay more attention to visible matters like church finances or building maintenance than to the invisible dynamics of the pastor's marriage and family," they write. "Many of the complexities of being married as pastor and spouse are hidden from public view. This training tool provides a wise and accessible way for pastors and church councils to strengthen the great gift that a pastor's marriage can bring to a congregation."

Marriage and Ministry will be published by the CRC's Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project and will be made available to churches later this year. The pastors and spouses who created the publication hope it will help churches realize that preventive action is worth the investment.

"Without focused, preventive action, the results for pastors and churches are predictable: pastoral burnout, frustration, division in the church and home, neglected children, failed marriages, and more," Gerber writes in the introduction. "We believe that this training tool, if used as a starting point for discussion and intentional action, will help prevent the conditions that often contribute to the breakdown of marriage and ministry."

Each chapter of *Marriage and Ministry* explores a different practice, issue or strategy relating to the topic of marriage and ministry. Chapter titles like "Balance," "Boundaries and Expectations," "Sabbaticals," "Retreats and Seminars," "Relationships," "Peer Groups," and "Burnout" demonstrate that the men and women who created this tool understand that building up the pastor's marriage and family life requires a holistic approach.

Each chapter ends with a "Pastor's Action Plan" and "Council Action Plan," check lists that provide practical steps each can take to create conditions in which both marriage and ministry can thrive. The publication also provides reference lists for a variety of published, web-based, and organizational resources that churches and pastors can consult to learn more about the topic covered in each of the chapters.

As the authors of *Marriage and Ministry* point out, burnout is far more costly – in both human and financial terms – than its prevention. Setting up some of the systems and supports presented in the publication will definitely take some time and effort on the part of pastors and churches. However, as the authors point out, that will be time well spent.

"A key ingredient in preventing the burnout [of pastors] is to build up the things that make for a happy and healthy marriage," writes Rev. Kenneth Prol in his chapter entitled "Burnout." "A pastor with a positive and nurturing marriage and family life will have greater vitality for ministry. If the demands of the church leave little or no time for family needs, burnout is on the horizon."

Prevention is crucial, agree the Petersons, and this publication provides tools for that task. "This training tool provides a wise and accessible way for pastors and church councils to strengthen the great gift that a pastor's marriage can bring to a congregation," their forward states. "It is obvious that good preaching and teaching, faithful visitation, and counsel are important – and there is much encouragement and affirmation to do these things well. This training tool places marriage on churches' agendas, too, along with these more public aspects of ministry."

Marriage and Ministry was written by Al and Jan Gelder, Ed and Michelle Gerber, Dick and Kathy Oberg, Ken and Diane Prol, Stan and Melody Sturing, Derek and Shirley Van Dalen, Jim and Alyce VandeLune.

For more information about *Marriage and Ministry* please contact:
Faith Alive
Phone 800-333-8300 (toll-free)
or email sales@FaithAliveResources.org

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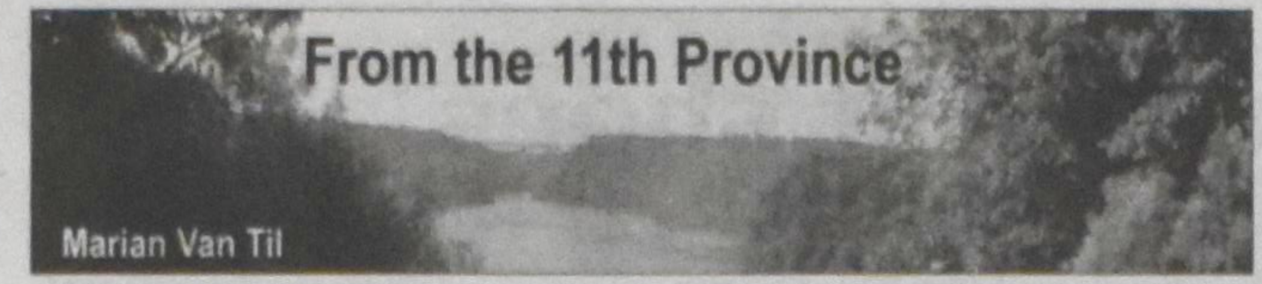
Reflections



Calvin's jigs and Luther's chorales revisited

Or: What are you singing in church these days?

As I've mentioned before, I work as the music director in a Lutheran congregation: Trinity in East Amherst, New York. If Christian Reformed congregations sing a lot on Sundays, Lutherans do even more.

Each week, I choose the music and, by means of the organ and choir, lead the Trinity Sunday worship (there's also a contemporary Saturday service). We sing four hymns, a Psalm, and liturgical responses woven throughout the service. The texts of these responses have had a long life in the history of Christian worship, having originated in the pre-Reformation Latin Mass, and some of them are fairly lengthy.

Depending on the season of the church year, there is a setting of the "Gloria" ("Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father: We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory...."); an "Alleluia" introduction to the Gospel reading; a "Sanctus" as part of the Communion preparation ("Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of power and might: heaven and earth are full or your glory...."); a setting of "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"; an offertory response ("Let the vineyards be fruitful..."), a post-Communion canticle ("Thank the Lord and sing his praise....") and the "Amen" after the benediction. Also depending on the season, there are sometimes additional responses or hymns.

As readers may have learned in school or in catechism, Calvin and Luther differed pointedly on certain issues, especially regarding Communion and how we are to view Law, Grace and the Kingdom. While those theological points are still important – how we see them is bound to effect how we see our work and Christ's work in the world – there is much that a Calvinist like I am can deeply relate to and take comfort from in a Lutheran worship service, theologically and musically. Perhaps that's why this is the third time I've worked in a Lutheran church since my organist days began while I was in high school.

Suppressed aesthetic sense

Were I ever to get a chance to talk with John Calvin on the new earth, and if rehashing failings on this earth were allowed (surely it won't be!), I might be so presumptuous as to point out to Monsieur Calvin that his insistence on his flocks' singing of Psalms only (unaccompanied), and eschewing all other music and all musical instruments in church as being *the* biblical way turned out to be a disservice to the many subsequent generations of the faithful who followed in the theological tradition he founded. (In insisting on unaccompanied singing Calvin was actually following the Roman church's Gregorian chant tradition. It was Luther who was the musical innovator.)

Calvin surely wasn't the ogre he has the reputation of having been, but he was a strong personality, and along with that he either didn't have or suppressed any aesthetic sense that would have allowed him (and for centuries, his followers) to see music as a much more expansive, edifying and, yes, thrilling, gift of God and praise-response *to* God than his apparently phlegmatic personality could handle.

Luther, whose aim was also to be biblically faithful, had no such aesthetic-musical qualms or deficiencies (I want to say "hang-ups," but that wouldn't be entirely fair to Calvin). Though Luther also had a strong personality, he thoroughly enjoyed music, in church and out, as the wonderful God-given tonic and means of praise that it is.

How could he not? Luther was himself an excellent amateur musician and became an equally good hymnwriter. While many of the Psalms of Calvin's Geneva are solid feet-on-the-ground, eyes-to-heaven, stirringly rhythmic renditions of biblical Psalms, the Lutheran chorales (many also based on Psalm texts) are also infused with a clear-eyed biblical spirit. These chorales, sour-stirring in their own right, were set in their most exquisite form by Johann Sebastian Bach (that great Lutheran saint).

Bach was not only one of humankind's greatest musical geniuses, but his devotion to God had a finely honed theological edge, which always informs his music. There have been, of course, fine chorale settings since Bach, who was alive 200 years after Luther. But it is impossible to top Bach when it comes to chorales and his use of them to compose roughly 300 cantatas based on the appointed Gospel Sunday after Sunday. Those cantatas are like musical sermons. It's no wonder that Bach been called the fifth evangelist.

Genevan tradition fading

I rejoice that my Trinity congregation on the whole still appreciates these chorales. Not just because I personally love the chorales, of course, but because they are musically sturdy, biblically profound effusions of congregational praise (and lament).

I hope that there are still proportionately as many people in Christian Reformed congregations that know and love and meditate on – in church and at home – the Genevan Psalms in the current *Psalter Hymnal,* or on even a few of them. The compilers of that book, in fact, deliberately included many more Genevan Psalm tunes than previous editions of the *Psalter Hymnal* did. It's ironic that Lutherans sing at least one Psalm in every worship service, a practice that many Calvinist congregations – history's Psalm singers – seem to have done away with.

The generation of post-war Dutch Canadians that I got to know when I moved from the U.S. to Canada in 1975 were still great Psalm-singers. They relished the Genevan tunes and sang them, in Dutch and English, with convicted gusto. I hope their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren have learned that lesson. But I have my doubts.

Too 'pietistic'

Some of the Lutheran chorales have been rejected over the years by Calvinist hymnal compilers (and perhaps theologians) as too pietistic, and indeed, some of the chorales are highly personal and devotional in character. But others are well-known and even loved in Calvinist churches, and a handful are known throughout Christendom: "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" (Luther's own), "Now Thank We All Our God," "O Sacred Head Now Wounded," "Jesus, Priceless Treasure," "All Glory Be to God on High," "Praise to the Lord the Almighty," "All Glory Laud and Honor," "How Bright Appears the Morning Star," "Comfort, Comfort Now My People," "If You But Trust in God to Guide You." There are quite a few others in the current *Psalter Hymnal*. Were you to peruse its index of tune names you would be able to pick them out by their German-language tune names.

From the Lutheran side, a few of the Genevan Psalm settings have been assimilated into Lutheran hymnals (and into broader Christendom), but Lutherans haven't received nearly as many Psalms from us Calvinists as we have received chorales from them. That is very likely because the unadorned, a cappella Genevan Psalms had no great champion like J.S. Bach to ensure that future generations of Christians would get to know them. Bach's superb chorale harmonizations made the chorales widely known as the pinnacle of congregational song, especially among the children of the Reformers.

Great depth

Both the Genevan Psalms and the Lutheran Chorales still speak profoundly, spiritually and emotionally. However, their riches do not necessarily lie open on the ground for easy picking up, so to speak. For modern churchgoers who are used to straightforward praise-and-worship songs or even 18th and 19th century hymns, the Genevan Psalms and Lutheran chorales may well require effort, a little digging, in order for the worshiper to uncover their gold.

The chorales tend to have more complex tunes (and sometimes rhythms) than most later hymns and modern worship songs do, and that's even more true of the Genevan Psalms. The texts reflect a similar profundity. They spin out in long phrases, becoming a sentence, then sentences, whose message is conveyed and added to from stanza to stanza, as good poetry does. But it is that very complexity, relative to much modern worship music, that makes both the Psalms and the chorales sink deep into one's soul *once they are known*. Especially today, if we are not to lose our Genevan Psalms (or miss out on the riches of the Lutheran chorales) they need to be consciously and enthusiastically taught to modern worshipers.

Ironically, the best instrument for doing that is the organ. I say ironically because of Calvin's refusal to allow its use in worship. Calvin's congregations sang the Psalms in unison, a cappella, and learned them line by line while led by what we today would call a cantor. It's quite possible for that to happen today. A good solo singer or group of unison singers can be enlisted to teach Genevan Psalms to a modern congregation if that church no longer has an organ, or doesn't use it.

Lively syncopation

It might surprise some of you that, above all, what the Genevan Psalms require of a leader or leaders is a good sense of rhythm. These Psalms ooze rhythm. Many are syncopated – that's why they earned the derisive moniker "Genevan jigs." Syncopation is a rhythmical trick that at certain points shifts or displaces the musical accent from beats that are normally accented (the "heavy beats" 1 and 3 if the piece has four beats per measure) to beats not normally accented (beats 2 or 4). So for the congregation to get the full effect of such a Psalms' words and music, that syncopation must be emphasized – and it shouldn't be sung too slowly!

I think my all-time favorite Genevan Psalm is Psalm 47, "Nations, Clap Your Hands." It was instantly compelling when I heard it some years ago conducted by the now retired Howard Slenk of Calvin College. It was so lively and syncopated that it made one want to sing along, and dance. And so it should! It expresses the epitome of joy at the knowledge that God reigns! It could be the Calvinists' sovereignty-of-God theme song.

I'll show how that sycopation works in Stanza 1. The heavily accented syllables are shown in bold capitals; the bold capped words at the end of each line are the syncopated words, words that wouldn't normally be accented at all. The words in regular bold are moderately accented. A hint regarding tempo: if you know this tune or look it up in the *Psalter Hymnal* (# 47) and sing it

Business directory

to yourself incorporating the accents, to capture the right feel of text and tune each stanza should take about 25 seconds and not more than 30.

NA-tions ***clap*** *your hands:* ***SHOUT***
with ***joy****, you* ***LANDS!***
AWE*-some* ***is*** *the Lord;* ***SPREAD***
his ***fame*** *a-****BROAD****.*
HE *rules* ***ev****-'ry land* ***WITH***
a ***might****-y* ***HAND****.*
GOD *brings* ***na****-tions low;* ***HE***
*sub-****dues*** *each* ***FOE****.* ***FROM***
his ***might****-y throne* ***GOD***
*pro-****tects*** *his* ***OWN****.*
OUR *in-****her****-i-tance* ***IS***
our ***sure*** *de-****FENSE****.*

To close I'll shift back to Luther's tradition. A chorale I learned as a teenager, courtesy of the superb choral conductor at the Christian high school I attended, has stuck with me over the years. It is a confession of loving God with all one's heart, of relying on him in life and in death, in joy or sorrow. It faces the world head-on, an understanding made possible by God's "lavish grace."

The last stanza is an intimate request for the Lord to send his angels to bear us home so that we may die unafraid. As I get older the chorale becomes more and more thrilling to me. Nor did it put me off when I was young: my mother was, in fact, dying of cancer at the time, and as it was her confession too it was a great comfort. It's the most complete confession of faith in one hymn that I can think of.

My choir at Trinity sang it twice two year's ago during the time that the congregation was earnestly praying for the preservation of one of our choir members who had late-stage lung cancer. He joined us at rehearsals after various rounds of treatment. The choir was deeply moved by the chorale, and it seemed apparent that everyone was thinking of Russ when we rehearsed it. Then, after we all sang it in rehearsal the first time Russ was back he matter-of-factly said he'd like it sung at his funeral. (I would say the same.) But Russ is still with us, and he's healthy.

**See sidebar.*

Marian Van Til worked for Christian Courier *from 1984-2000, and preceded Harry der Nederlanden as its editor. She now lives in Youngstown, NY. She may be contacted by email at: mvantil@roadrunner.com or via her website: www.wordpowerpublishing.com*

Lord, you I love with all my heart; I pray, never from me depart;
with tender mercy cheer me.
Earth has no pleasure I would share, yes, heav'n itself were void and bare
if you, Lord were not near me.
And should my heart for sorrow break, my trust in you nothing can shake.
You are the portion I have sought; your precious blood my soul has bought.
Lord Jesus Christ, My God and Lord, my God and Lord,
Forsake me not! I trust your Word.

Yes, Lord 'twas your rich bounty gave my body, soul, and all I have
in this poor life of labor.
Lord, grant that I in every place may glorify your lavish grace
and serve and help my neighbor.
Let no false doctrine me beguile, let Satan not my soul defile.
Give strength and patience to me now to bear my cross and follow you.
Lord Jesus Christ, My God and Lord, my God and Lord,
In death your comfort still afford.

Lord, let at last your angels come, to Abraham's bosom bear me home
that I may die unfearing;
and in its narrow chamber keep my body safe in peaceful sleep
until your reappearing.
And then from death awaken me, that these mine eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, your glorious face, my Savior and my fount of grace.
Lord Jesus Christ, my prayer attend, my prayer attend,
and I will praise you without end!

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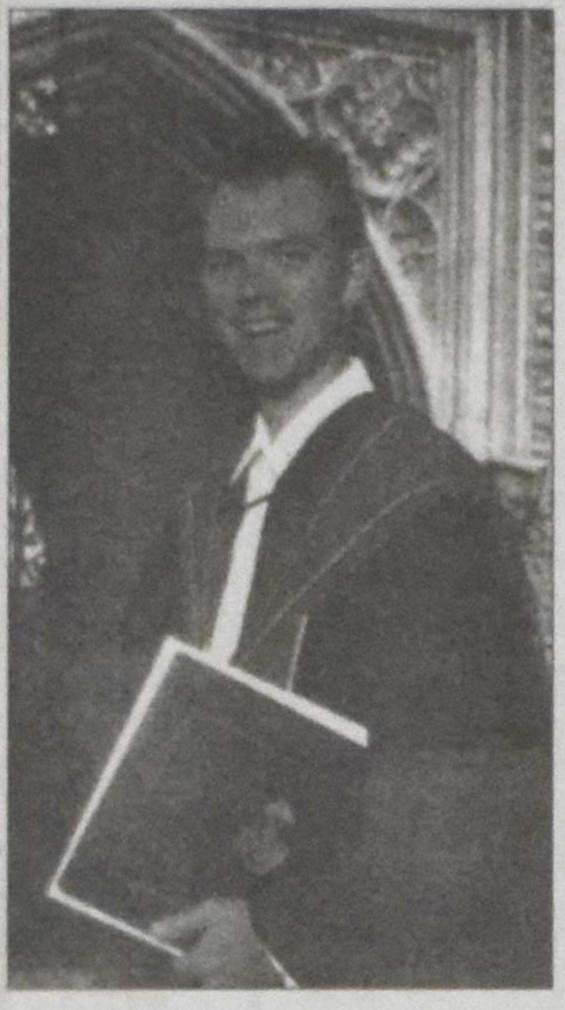

recently graduated with a PhD in Medieval Studies from the University of Toronto.

During this past winter-term he lectured at Redeemer University College from which he himself graduated in 1997.

He has accepted an offer of a part-time job at York University in Toronto.

Congratulations and God's blessing, Milton.
Your parents, Jim & Alice Kooistra

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Anniversaries

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Louis & Claudia Sytsma – David
Andrew & Sandi Sytsma – Alysha, Madisyn

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We thank the Lord for all his care and blessings as we joyfully celebrate the **40th Wedding Anniversary** on September 4, 2008 of our parents/grandparents

Henk and Margaret Boer (nee **Loopers**)

Grace & Gerald Schipper – Henri, Marenda, Gerard, Alyssa from *Aylmer, ON*
John & Corrie Boer – Jessica, Janneke, Michael from *Listowel, ON*
Gary Boer from *Listowel, ON*
Henry & Jetske Boer – Anita, Mariska, Heidi, Lucas from Atwood, ON
Mariska & Carl Pelkmans – Jordan, Marcia from Listowel, ON

You are invited to celebrate with us at an **Open House**, D.V. on Saturday, September 6, 2008 from 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. at the Listowel Christian School, 6020 Line 87, Listowel, Ontario

Home address: 670 Riverview Drive, Listowel ON N4W 3T7

Ijsselmuiden, NL 1948 August 25 2008 Barrie, Ontario

With thanksgiving and deep affection, we are happy to announce the

60th Wedding Anniversary of

Hendrik de Zoete and Willemina de Zoete-Schinkel

God has been their refuge and strength in all life's circumstances.

With love from their children,
Henk and Anna de Zoete – *Hamilton, ON*
Rick and Shirl de Zoete – *North Augusta, ON*
Gus de Zoete – *Barrie, ON*
Roy and Evelyn de Zoete – *Brampton, ON*
Mienke Straatsma – *Barrie, ON*
Anita and Tom Van Beek – *Charlotte, NC*
Dolf de Zoete – *Stroud, ON*
20 grandchildren and 4 great children

Home address: Apt. 312-270 Hurst Drive, Barrie ON L4N 0Z3

Obituaries

Klaas (Clare) Jonkman

Hoogeveen, Holland
October 16, 1934

At home – Georgetown
July 31, 2008

Psalm 27:1

Entered into eternal rest, our much loved husband, father and opa.
Predeceased by Francina Alberda 1980

Survived by his wife Nellie Jonkman
Children and grandchildren:
Peter Jonkman
Bill & Laura Harbers – Alison, Michael, Jennifer, Emily
Ken & Loriann Harbers – Shannon, Brent, Tyler
Harvey & Heather Jonkman – Zachary, Hunter
Brian & Nance Jonkman – Jabez, Kaleigh, Deagan
Andrew & Andrea Jonkman

Correspondence: Nellie Jonkman
56 Jason Crescent, Georgetown ON L7G 4Z4

With sorrow in our hearts we announce the death of our son and brother

Darryl Arthur Van Den Tempel

on Thursday August 7, 2008 in an ATV accident while vacationing on Manitoulin Island at age 21.

Darryl attended Mornington Central and Milverton Public Schools, Stratford Northwestern, and was a 2007 Graduate of the Funeral Services Program at Humber College in Toronto. He was employed as a Funeral Director with the W. G. Young Funeral Home in Stratford. Darryl played baseball and hockey in his youth and played Church Hockey and Rugby with the Stratford Black Swans, and also helped with chores on the Family Farm.

Much loved son and brother of:
Ted & Liz (Tiesma) – David (Lauren), Thea, Sofia, Derek, Benjamin
Grandson of:
George & Wilhelmina Van Den Tempel, *Stratford, ON*
Arthur G. & Eda Tiesma, *London, ON*
Special friend of: Katie Roth, and her family –
Stewart & Wendy Roth – Amy, Jill (Dan), Colleen, *Hickson, ON*
Nephew and cousin of:
Andy & Sharon Van Den Tempel – Cory (Crystal), Stewart, *Sebringville, ON*
Joanne & Mark Wraith – Trevor (Leanne), Jessica, *Stratford, ON*
Geraldine & Ron Seyle – Jason, Jamie, *Stratford, ON*
Yolanda & Jamie Cameron – Jay (Megan), Wendel, Wesley, *Walkerton, ON*
Heather & Aubrey Postma – Aaron, Tyler, *Abbotsford, BC*
Lucinda & Mike Klapwyk – Isabel, Quin, Ilse, *Edmonton, AB*
Arch & Jennifer – Spencer, Paige, Madison, Emma, *Beachville, ON*

and their families

The Funeral Service was held on Tuesday, August 12, 2008 at Poole Mennonite Church, with Pastor Paul Dyck officiating. Burial in the church cemetery.

Home address: General Delivery, Poole ON N0K 1S0

Classified Rates

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION
Christian Courier is published on the second and fourth Monday of each month. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Wednesday, 12 days prior to publication date.
RATE: (GST added to rates listed)
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rose@christiancourier.ca
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Email: sj.kalma@hetnet.nl

Dutch Service

October 5, 2008
Dutch Service will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m.
Rev. Henry DeBolster will be preaching.

Welkom

Classis Chatham of the CRCNA
has an opening for a part time person as

Classical Ministry Developer

The successful applicant will be a person who loves the Lord and His church; is a member of and strongly committed to the Christian Reformed Church, is pastorally sensitive, Christ like in character and has gifts in the areas of visioning, administration and communication.

Responsibilities include some staff work with CMC, arranging various training opportunities, continuing work on developingand implementing the vision and mission of classis, and meeting with church leaders in classis to discover, and fill, ministry needs and opportunities.

Further information may be obtained from
Mrs. Jane Adema at jsadema@hotmail.com

Shalom Manor & Gardens

Shalom Manor
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Registered Practical Nurses
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Director of Care
12 Bartlett Ave
Grimsby ON L3M 4N5

Fax: (905) 945-1211 Email:info@shalommanor.ca

Ability to communicate in the Dutch language is an asset.

See our website for recently advertised job ads.
Go to *www.christiancourier.ca* and click on the link.

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needs to fill a 0.5 FTE position for the 2008 / 2009 school year.
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or
Career Counselor

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For more information or to apply for this position, please contact
Rob vanSpronsen, Principal
(403) 634-8401
Rob.vanSpronsen@gmail.com

Immanuel Christian High School
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Lethbridge AB T1H 0S1

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Promissory Notes

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Established by the Elim Housing Society in 1995, Elim Village is located on 20 acres in the heart of Surrey's Fleetwood area. Based and operated on Christian principles, Elim's vision is to provide various levels of quality care for seniors.

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We currently offer **Royal Bank of Canada's prime plus 1%** (not to exceed 7%)

On August 18, 2008 Elim Investments were accruing interest at **5.75%**

ELIM Village

For more information regarding investment with Elim Village, contact **Terry-Lynn Dryfhout** at **tld@elimvillage.com** or call **778.996.7755**
Visit our website at **www.ElimVillage.com**

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Saskatoon is a major centre in the province with a city population near 250,000. Saskatoon offers all the amenities of a larger city but with the feel of small-town life. Agriculture, commercial, and residential areas are all experiencing the dynamics of growth. The large University of Saskatchewan, three hospitals, Civic Centres, many malls, Christian school, churches are only part of the attractions of the city. The vibrancy of the city interacts with the beautiful setting of parks along the river and green spaces in every urban area. With wilderness, beaches, skiing, fishing, boating, and tourist attractions not far away, Saskatoon is a great place to raise a family. Saskatoon is within a day's drive of other major centres and flights leave daily from the international airport to many other areas.

Bethel Christian Reformed Church has served as the only Reformed church presence in the Saskatoon area for more than 50 years. Currently, the congregation is excited about the new building project which will much better accommodate the needs we have. The building is on the North end of Saskatoon just off a major highway with plenty of space to grow. Our congregation is diverse in Reformed backgrounds, age groups and careers and we pray for God's continued blessing also at our new location as we work together to be His light to the world.

Saskatoon is experiencing unprecedented growth and economic opportunities. If you are interested in exploring your family's options in Saskatoon, please email the links below.

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Dairy:
- Herdsman positions for large dairies available.
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Send your questions or resumes to
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with your contact information and interests.

Classifieds

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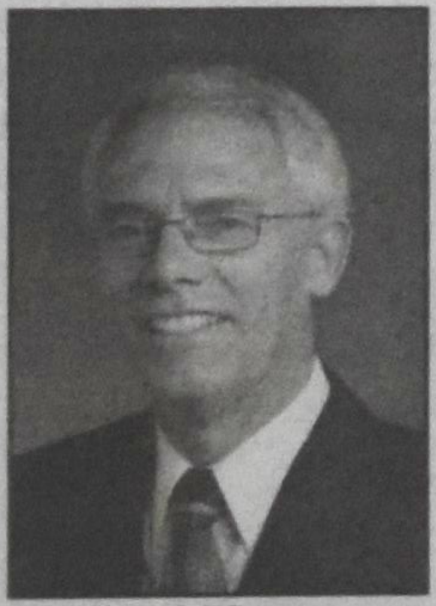

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THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

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BRITISH COLUMBIA		
Burns Lake – CFLD	9:15 am	1400
Osoyoos – CJOR	8:00 am	1490
Prince George – CIRX	7:00 am	94.3
Princeton – CHOR	8:00 am	1400
Smithers – CFBV	9:15 am	1230
Vernon – CJIB	9:30 pm	94
ALBERTA		
Brooks – CIBQ	8:30 am	1340
Edmonton – CJCA	6:00 pm	930
MANITOBA		
Winnipeg – CKJS	9:00 am	810
ONTARIO		
Atikokan – CFAK	9:30 am	1240
Chatham – CFCO	6:30 am	630
Hamilton – CHAM	7:30 am	820
London – CKSL	7:00 am	1410
Owen Sound – CFOS	7:00 am	560
Sarnia – CHOK	7:30 am	1070
Stratford – CJCS	8:45 am	1240
Wingham – CKNX	10:30 am	920
Woodstock – CJFH	7:30 am	94.03
NEW BRUNSWICK		
Saint John – CHSJ	9:00 am	94.1
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND		
Charlottetown – CFCY	7:00 am	630
NOVA SCOTIA		
Digby – CKDY	6:00 am	1420
Halifax – CFDR	8:30 am	780
Liverpool – CKBW	7:30 am	94.5
Kentville – CKEN	8:30 am	1490
Middleton – CKAD	8:30 am	1350
Shelburne – CKBW	7:30 am	93.1
Sydney – CJCB	7:00 am	1270
Weymouth – CKDY	8:30 am	103.1
Windsor – CFAB	8:30 am	1450

TELEVISION - ***PRIMARY FOCUS***

AB Lethbridge – CJIL Thurs at 9 pm.
BC- OMNI - Sunday 4 pm
TBN (Trinity Broadcasting Network)

Kids Corner Radio

ALBERTA	
Drayton Valley CIBW 92.9 FM	Sun. 8:30 am
High River/Calgary CHRB 1140 AM	Sun. 4:30pm
Nordegg CHBW 93.9 FM	Sun. 8:30 am
Rocky Mtn.House CHBW 94.5 FM.	Sun. 8:30 am
BRITISH COLUMBIA	
Prince Rupert CIAJ 100.7 FM	Sat. 10 am
MANITOBA	
Steinbach CHSM 1250 AM	Sun. 4 pm
NOVA SCOTIA	
Bridgewater CKBW 1000 AM	Sun. 5:30 am
ONTARIO	
Oshawa CKDO 1350 AM	Sat. 8 am
Woodstock CJFH 94.3 FM	Sat. 8 am
SASKATCHEWAN	
Estevan CJSL 1280 AM	Sun. 7 am
Weyburn CJSL 1190 AM	Sun. 7 am

Trillium League Reunion (Ontario)

If you were involved in Trillium League Youth during the years of 1975 and 1982, you are invited to reminisce & reconnect on

Saturday, November 8 from 4-9 pm

at Community Christian Reformed Church in **Kitchener**. Be sure to inform any former trillium leaguers. For details go to www.trilliumleaguereunion.com or email Phia (Hoogendoorn) Howes at phia@sympatico.ca or call 519-699-5942.

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Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2008

Sep 20 Celebrate 40 years of The Lighthouse on Saturday at Willowdale Christian School (60 Hilda Ave) in **Willowdale**, ON starting at 5:00 with light refreshments and at 6:30 with a light program. Contact Rob Datema: rob@lighthousecentre.ca or 416-535-6262

Sep 23 Organ recital featuring Stephanie Burgoyne (ARCCO) and William Vandertuin (solo and organ four hands) at St. Paul's Cathedral, **London**, 12 noon. (wvan08@rogers.com)

Sep 27 2008 Worldview Conference at Kings Christian Collegiate, 528 Burnhamthorpe Rd, **Oakville**, Ont. Info and registration at www.icscanada.edu/events. See ad.

Oct 4 Get Connected partnership Banquet hosted by CRC campus ministries, Uni. of Guelph & Uni. of Waterloo/Laurier. Banquet 6:30 -9:00 at the Drayton CRC. Contact: Eve Mazereeuw emazereeuw@gmail.com or 519-827-1753 Ad to follow in upcoming issues.

Oct 5 Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Henry DeBolster will be preaching.

Oct 18 Day of Encouragement. An opportunity for all deacons, elders and church members to be encouraged, inspired and equipped for ministry. This event takes place at Hamilton District Christian High in **Ancaster**. Our theme is 'Walking in His Way'. 50 workshops await your registration. The cost is $55.00. Registration flyers and details are available at www.diaconalministries.com or call (905) 336-2920 for more information.

Nov 6 Organ recital featuring Stephanie Burgoyne (ARCCO) and William Vandertuin (solo and organ four hands) at Trinity Anglican Church, **Cambridge**, 12:15 p.m. (wvan08@rogers.com)

Nov 8 Trillium Leaque Reunion (Ontario) If you were involved in Trillium League Youth during the years of 1975 and 1982, you are invited to reminisce & reconnect on Saturday from 4-9 pm at Community Christian Reformed Church in **Kitchener**. Be sure to inform any former trillium leaguers. For details go to www.trilliumleaguereunion.com or email Phia (Hoogendoorn) Howes at phia@sympatico.ca or call 519-699-5942

Institute for Christian Studies
UPCOMING EVENTS

1967 - 2007

2008 Worldview Conference
Bob Sweetman, a historian of philosophy at ICS

Another Brick in the Wall

1. **Just Another Brick in the Wall**
   Why We Don't Join Institutions Anymore
2. **Will Our Church Have Children?**
   Emergent Possibilites

Saturday Sept 27
Kings Christian Collegiate
528 Burnhamthorpe Road, Oakville ON

Info and Registration at
www.icscanada.edu/events/

ICS

The Lighthouse's 40th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday • September • 20 • 2008

5:00 p.m. Light Refreshments
6:30-7:30 p.m. Program
At Willowdale Christian School
60 Hilda Avenue Willowdale, ON

Come and join the celebration of the Lighthouse ministry
For Information: Janet 416-535-6262 or janet@lighthousecentre.ca

faith seeks understanding

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Saturday, October 4, 6:30 - 9:00
Drayton Christian Reformed Church
(88 Main St. E.)
Tickets – $20.
Deadline – Sept 20.
Grade 11 & 12 students come free but must RSVP

Really interested? Sponsor a table of 8 for $160 and invite others to hear for themselves what God is doing through campus ministry.
Ticket & Table Sponsor Contact:
Eve Mazereeuw
emazereeuw@gmail.com
or **519-827-1753**
More details in Sep. issues.

Shalom Manor

Shalom Manor (Grimsby)
INVESTMENT NOTES

5-year maturity 4.20% interest
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(Interest rates subject to change)

Interest on the notes will be paid or compounded semi-annually.

Proceeds from the sales of notes will be used to help finance the recent redevelopment of Shalom Gardens Retirement Apartments and are secured by a promissory note.

For further information contact:

Emma Winter, Chair of the Finance Committee
1 – 905 – 563-4681
or
Darren DeCaire, Controller/Manager of Finance
12 Bartlett Avenue, Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5
1 - 905 - 945-9631

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Day of Encouragement

Saturday **October 18, 2008**

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Theme
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50 workshops
Registration information in Calendar of Events

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News

A head, and heart, for the lowly potato

Sara Miller Llana (CSM)

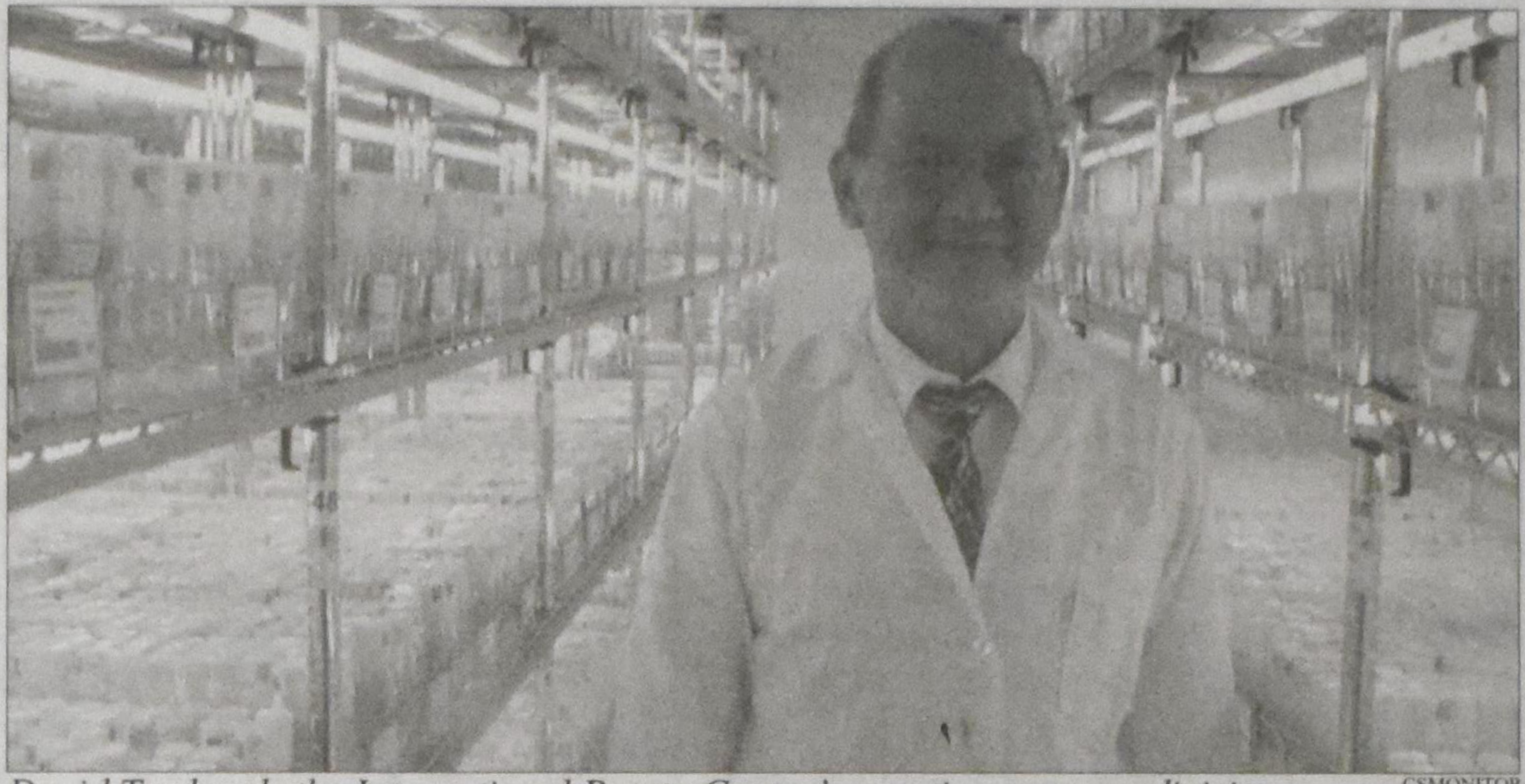
David Tay loves potatoes. And lives them, too. At Peru's International Potato Center, he's trying to save 4,600 varieties native to the Andes – just as potatoes get a closer look all over the world. David Tay puts on a lab coat and pushes through a door labeled with a black-and-white sign that reads simply, "Potato."

This room, where thousands of "plantlets" sit in test tubes under bright lights, is his domain, his turf – his potato patch. Here at the International Potato Center (CIP) – home of the world's largest potato collection – Dr. Tay is the head of the potato gene bank, where scientists are seeking to keep alive the 4,600 potato varieties .

Maintaining a potato collection is not cutting-edge science, the type that lands on the front pages of research journals. It is tedious, thankless work. Tay jokingly compares it to garbage collection – meaning the kind of job that most people prefer not to do.

Yet for him, it's a treasure trove: "I feel that God has been kind to me," says the bespectacled scientist, who was born in Malaysia and wrote his thesis on potatoes, researching them here at this center 30 years ago. His mission today is to preserve all the CIP's varieties as part of a poverty-reduction and food-security program, so that no type of potato disappears, and all types are available to farmers and researchers. "We all feel this is our social responsibility for the present and future generations," he says.

Just a few months ago, these words might have seemed hyperbolic. But the spud has suddenly been thrust into the spotlight, now that prices for soy, wheat, and corn have skyrocketed. The United Nations has called 2008 the Year of the Potato, as has Peru. Governments around the world are turning to the root to help ease hunger. Peru's military is eating potato bread instead of regular white. And at this humble center in Lima, the phone is suddenly ringing off the hook, journalists are knocking at the door, and requests for expertise are pouring in from around the world.



David Tay heads the International Potato Center's genetic-resources division. CSMONITOR

"Potatoes are being looked at as one of the pathways out of poverty," says Pamela Anderson, the center's director general.

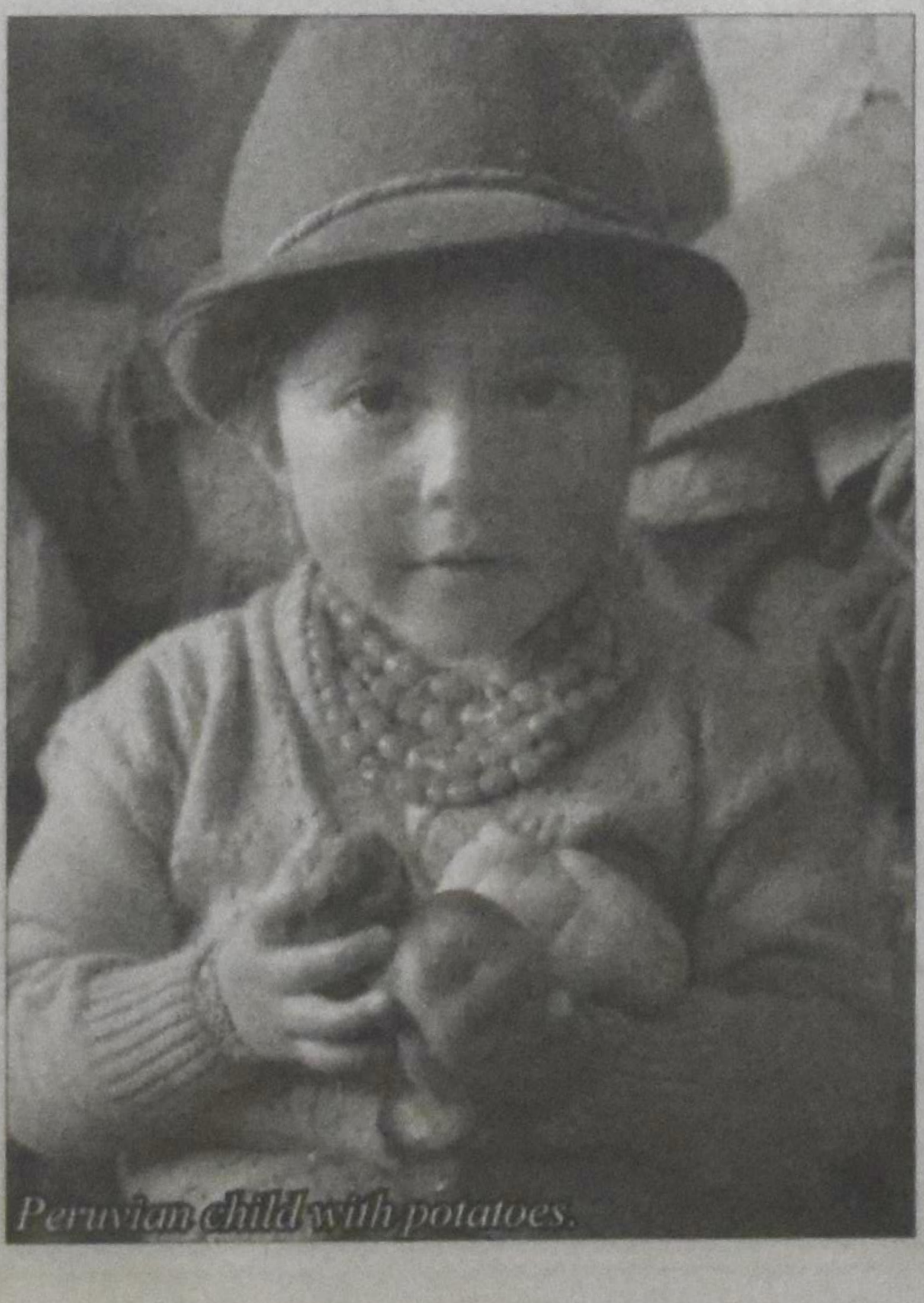
But aren't potatoes from…?

Tay understands the question even before you get it out. "Americans think potatoes are from Idaho," he says. "Ask a European, and they say the potato is from Ireland."

Actually, it's Peruvian. Potatoes date back about 8,000 years, to the shores of Lake Titicaca, 3,800 meters above sea level, in what is today Peru. Incan armies ate potatoes centuries ago, and rural communities eat them today. An estimated 5,000 varieties grow in the Andean region; 80 percent of those sit in the CIP.

In fact, spend just one hour in this sleek, modern center, and your understanding of the potato – if you are one who thinks first of russets and Yukon Golds – will be transformed. In neat metal trays sit a sampling of about 40 kinds, ranging from the common yellow to the chaucha amarilla, an ugly tuber with purple sprouts that Tay calls a favorite.

They come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and textures, with names such as yana puma maki and yuraq chojlla. Some are lumpy, others smooth; some are plump, others curl like plumbers' tubes. One, whose name translates into English as "Makes the daughter-in-law cry," even has its own lore: Purée it well, and you've won your mother-in-law's approval.



Peruvian child with potatoes.

But this collection's splendor has gone largely unknown – or at least underappreciated – until now. The potato, with its complex carbohydrates and ability to grow at various climates and altitudes, is being reconsidered amid food shortages. "We are a grain-centric world," says Ms. Anderson. "Finally our message is getting out."

These days, the potato center is helping other countries strengthen their potato-seed systems. India is trying to double its potato production, while China, where in some poor regions potatoes are consumed daily, has become the world's largest potato producer. In 2005, for the first time, potato production in developing countries surpassed that of the developed world.

But if the world is more excited about potatoes these days, they are just catching up with Tay. "Potatoes are always exciting," he says, very seriously.

A native of Borneo, Tay grew up with the jungle two miles from his door. Wild orchids and animals kindled his interest in conservation. But the only potatoes he ever saw were old and withered by the time they arrived in his hometown. In fact, by the time he got to England for his PhD, he believed all potatoes were soft by nature.

In England Tay was invited to work at the CIP, where he researched the cryopreservation of potatoes. He went on to sugarcane breeding and led other germ-plasm conservation centers, a career that's taken him from the Barbados to Taiwan to Ohio, and back to Peru last year. "I felt like I couldn't retire until I finished with potatoes," he says.

On a recent day, he wanders through the bank, where specimens sit in storage at about 8 degrees C (46 degrees F.) under dim lights for up to two years before they are taken to the scientists for regeneration.

He opens the door to a freezer where native seeds can be kept, they believe, for 40 years at minus 20 degrees C (or minus 4 degrees F.). This is also where the CIP keeps meristems, or tiny shoot tips, frozen in liquid nitrogen. "It's like science fiction here," Tay says.

When plantlets weaken, the workers cart them off to the "transfer room," pare the nodes, and replant them into new tubes, where the potatoes will recover and be stored again.

The CIP is repatriating native varieties to rural Andean communities in order to keep the roots thriving. The center is also pushing for processed versions of the less common potatoes, and even companies as large as Lay's are biting, with a new bag of native chips called Andinas.

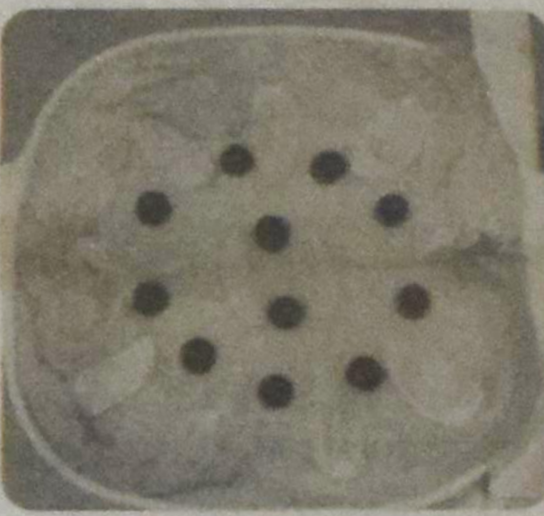
"In urban areas, people don't realize the treasure we have in the Andes," says Kurt Manrique, the technical coordinator for the Promotion of the Competitive Production of Peruvian Potatoes (INCOPA) at the CIP.

Peruvian chefs are joining in, rebranding the potato as haute cuisine. At El Señorio de Sulco, in the upscale, seaside neighborhood of Miraflores, the specialty is the causa limeña, a Peruvian take on a sandwich, with two layers of mashed-potato-and-chicken-salad filling with lemon zest (eaten with a fork).

It might seem that all the buzz about potatoes, coupled with working at the CIP, would dampen one's appetite for tubers, the way some pizza deliverers can't face a simple pepperoni and cheese. But Tay says he never tires of potatoes. He eats them every day. "I just had papas a la huancaina for breakfast today," he says – a Peruvian specialty with a rich sauce that includes cheese, evaporated milk, crackers, and pepper.

These days, the potato is appearing everywhere – on supermarket shelves and in restaurants around town. But Tay is no fair-weather friend to the spud: His loyalty is old and steady. He still likes his potatoes simple and soft – as if they've been sitting in storage for months.

Peruvian traditional plate: Causa Limeña Mashed potatoes with lime and chili, filled with tuna fish, olives, mayonnaise, avocado



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